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ABSTRACT

This booklet is part of a series designed to help students take and defend a position on public issues. In this unit, the progressive era, a major reform period in U.S. history that stretched from about 1900 to 1915 is discussed. The book suggests that large scale reform is difficult to achieve because reformers often assume that their interests, values, and goals are shared by everyone except the "bad guys." Yet the bad guys often are not bad, just operating with a different set of interests, values, and goals. Reforms in one era may create the problems another generation of reformers tries to solve. Illustrating these differences of opinion are the critical questions of this unit: (1) Who should decide what reforms are needed? How can we distinguish between a change to advance a special interest and a reform in the public interest? What are the best methods for achieving change? (2) What is the government's responsibility to provide for and protect the health and safety of individuals? What is the individual's responsibility for protecting himself and other members of society? and (3) What is a corrupt government? Can government be better than the people it governs? What is the good citizen? This document is divided into six sections. The first is introductory. The second discusses the emergence of progressivism, and includes the United States at the turn of the century, the muckrakers, citizen action, and the progressives on education. The section on reforming city government discusses political machines and corruption. The fourth section talks about consumer protection. The fifth section relates these ideas to today's issues. The last section is a review and provides reflection on the topic. In the accompanying teacher's guide, instructions are given for the teacher to analyze the issues and teach the unit. The guide suggests that teachers preparing to teach the unit should have students come up with a list of current social problems. The teacher then chooses one of the issues to which strong disagreement is guaranteed. Students may then be divided into small groups. Handouts are included in which students learn about different types of issues and strategies for dealing with them. Instructions for introducing the unit offer information for the sections in the text including the emergence of progressivism, reforming city government, federal action toward consumer protection, and today's issues. A 10-item bibliography and three student handouts are included in this teacher's guide. The handouts are on strategies for analyzing public issues, who is responsible, and what is a proper response to a wrong or injury? (DK)

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The Limits of Reform

Public Issues Series

THE PROGRESSIVE ERA: THE LIMITS OF REFORM

Adapted from the Harvard Social Studies Project
by James R. Giese
under the direction of
Donald W. Oliver and Fred M. Newmann

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What Is the Public Issues Series?

The Public Issues Series is a collection of units designed to help you take and defend a position on public issues. A public issue is a question involving a choice or decision over which there is disagreement. Public issues can be answered by all the citizens of a nation or community or by officials acting for them:

- Should the United States take more severe action against South Africa?

Public issues can also be phrased as choices for personal action:

- Should I picket the South African embassy?

Many issues that people have faced at other times in history are still issues today. They simply reappear in different forms. For example, questions about when people should challenge authority have persisted from the time of the American Revolution to the present. People may, however, respond to the questions in different ways; as a result, examining issues as they appeared at different times can help us better understand both the past and the present.

This unit, like others in the Public Issues Series, involves you as much more than a spectator to history. Instead, you will be a thinking, acting participant in the past, the present, and even the future.

What Are the Central Issues of This Unit?

Many historians view the progressive era – roughly 1900 to 1915 – as a major reform period in U.S. history. But what, exactly, is meant by *reform*? Who is given the label *reformer*?

Finley Peter Dunne, a journalist of the era, created a fictional Irish saloonkeeper through whom he presented his views on events from the Spanish-American War to World War I. About reformers, the popular Martin Dooley observed, "a man that would expect to train lobsters to fly in a year is called a lunatic; but a man that thinks men can be turned into angels by an election is called a reformer."

Many would agree with Dooley that large-scale reform is difficult to achieve. Why is this true? Reformers, regardless of the causes they support, often assume their interests, values, and goals are shared by everyone except the "bad guys." Yet the bad guys often are not "bad" at all – they are simply operating with a different set of interests, values, and

goals. In fact, reforms in one era may create the problems another generation of reformers tries to solve!

As we study the progressive era, it is helpful to keep in mind some of the underlying differences of opinion that make reform so difficult to achieve. These differences can be found in answers to the following questions, the critical questions of this unit:

- Who should decide what reforms are needed? How can we distinguish between a change to advance a special interest and a reform in the public interest? What are the best methods for achieving change?
- What is the government's responsibility to provide for and protect the health and safety of individuals? What is the individual's responsibility for protecting him/herself and other members of society?
- What is a corrupt government? Can government be better than the people it governs? What is the good citizen?

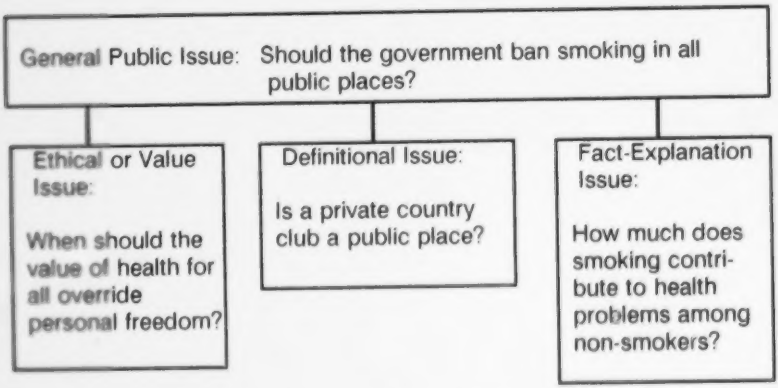
How Will We Approach the Issues in This Unit?

In this unit, you will take part in many discussions. Remember that not every discussion will resolve disagreements. It is often just as useful for people to learn to state their ideas with more precision and clarity and to discover precisely how their ideas differ from those of others.

No matter what the purpose of the discussion, it can become bogged down by smaller disagreements. Learning to identify the kinds of questions being raised can help keep the discussion moving. In discussing public issues, people generally look at three kinds of questions:

- Ethical or value questions. These questions deal with judgments about what should or ought to be done – judgments about rightness and wrongness.
- Questions of definition. These questions revolve around the meaning of important words or phrases.
- Questions involving facts and explanations. These questions focus on disagreements about the descriptions or explanations of events.

Examples of each kind of question are given in the diagram below:


General Public Issue: Should the government ban smoking in all public places?
Ethical or Value Issue:
When should the value of health for all override personal freedom?
Definitional Issue:
Is a private country club a public place?
Fact-Explanation Issue:
How much does smoking contribute to health problems among non-smokers?

You may be starting to see that dealing with public issues involves thinking on several levels at the same time:

- Thinking about the controversial topic at hand.
- Thinking about the process of clarifying the topic by identifying the kinds of questions being raised and using strategies for dealing with them.
- Thinking about the feelings and relationships we develop toward others in the conversation and how we can deal constructively with these feelings.

Remember that the reason for discussing a public issue is not to "win" the argument but to understand more clearly your own views and the reasons that support them, as well as differing opinions.

The United States at the Turn of the Century

In 1900, there was an air of crisis in the United States, but it was a mixture of confidence and foreboding. As you read the essay, look for grounds for that well-entrenched characteristic of Americans – optimism. Also look for evidence that serious problems faced the nation.

* * * * *

In 1898, the United States had emerged as a world power, signified by its stunning defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American War. As a result, the other great world powers began to accord the United States the respect due one of their own. The farm problem, seen in the Populist revolt, had been cured (for a time) by the insatiable new demands for foodstuffs in Europe and steeply rising prices for farm products. The Depression of 1893 was only a vague memory. Prosperity had returned to the United States; national wealth had nearly doubled between 1890 and 1900 despite the depression years.

There were other grounds for Americans to continue their faith in progress. They marveled at the new technological advances. Wireless communication, the telephone, typewriter, electric lighting, the discovery of X-rays, the airplane, and the horseless carriage, among many other things, gave Americans confidence that things were getting better and would continue to do so. The nation's factories were providing better goods, more cheaply, in ever-greater quantities. Industrialism was also creating many new jobs – in management, finance, and law as well as factory work – for people fresh off the farm or from rural villages.

The cities, although suffering from the problems of too rapid growth, offered numerous attractions. Single-family houses and apartments came with the most modern conveniences. Rapid transit opened up vast stretches of suburban land for commuter communities. In addition to vast employment opportunities, cities also offered many distractions. The city's color, noise, and bright lights offered excitement in otherwise dull lives. Vaudeville shows, the theater, concerts, art museums, baseball games, and amusement parks entertained the millions of people coming to live in the nation's cities.

Yet many contemporaries awaited the turn of the century with a good deal of anxiety. Life had not always been easy on the farm or in the small towns and villages in which most native-born Americans had been reared, but it seemed certain, stable, and pious. Their world had

been characterized by hard work, self-denial, individual responsibility, equality of opportunity, and the expectation of gain and material well-being. Moreover, common ethnic origins, common Protestant religion, and common belief that "that government is best which governs least," created strong ties that bound communities together.

Given their background in rural, relatively isolated and self-contained communities, it is little wonder that Americans of this generation became concerned about the destabilizing effects of modernization. To many, the results of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration were appalling. They saw the rise of big business and the amassing of great fortunes as a threat to cherished values. Special privileges were changing the rules of the game – in society, the economy, and politics. In addition to this threat from "above," many Americans felt threatened from "below." Immigrants, with their strange ways and beliefs, were foreign in every sense. The working class was frightening to many who were aware only of the strikes and riots or poverty and disease that attracted publicity.

The nation's cities, always viewed with suspicion by rural America, now contained the majority of industry, immigrants, and the working

class. They also faced associated problems: epidemics, high mortality rates, drunkenness, immorality, unemployment, ethnic and racial divisions, and radicalism. Still, the cities were sinks of corruption that were attracting thousands of rural young people every year.

By 1900, many Americans had come to believe that these accumulating problems had to be solved. Consequently, people of all sorts became involved in reform activities. Some reformers were concerned primarily with social justice, others with decency, immorality, and corruption, and yet others with efficiency. Occasionally these diverse reformers joined forces to solve specific common problems. Other Americans opposed specific reforms for equally diverse reasons.

It is against this backdrop of social change, perceived problems, and competing values that we may begin to understand the progressive era.

Questions for Conversation

1. What evidence did you find to support optimism at the turn of the century?

2. What evidence did you find to support pessimism?

3. Do you think American cities today repel or attract people? Give examples to support your answer.

The Muckrakers

Successful reform requires public support. In this period, such support was generated by books and newspaper and magazine articles of criticism and exposure, popularly known as "muckraking." The muckrakers—journalists, social scientists, historians, and other writers—exposed the evils (and alleged evils) of the United States and urged their reform. Almost to a person, the muckrakers tried to find ways to achieve "the promise of American life" (as one of them called it).

The muckrakers found a receptive audience. One historian estimated that over 2,000 articles of exposure appeared in such magazines as *McClure's*, *Arena*, and *Collier's* between 1903 and 1912. This does not even count the large number of widely read muckraking novels, books, and reports. The muckraking journals enjoyed wide popular success. At a time when a circulation of 100,000 was considered a wide readership, *McClure's* circulation was 750,000; *Collier's* was over one million. Many who read this literature over a period of years were moved to action, particularly when vigorous progressive leaders appeared on the local, state, and national scenes.

Muckrakers uncovered problems like those described below.

* * * * *

Item: "There are probably in fairly prosperous years no less than 10,000,000 persons in poverty; that is to say, underfed, underclothed, and poorly housed...Nearly half of the families in the country are propertyless" (*Poverty*, 1904).

Item: "Gullible America will spend this year some seventy-five millions of dollars in the purchase of patent medicines. In consideration of this sum it will swallow huge quantities of alcohol, an appalling amount of opiates and narcotics,...and, far in excess of all other ingredients, undiluted fraud" (Samuel Hopkins, *Colliers*, 1905).

Item: "We can no longer afford to permit the sewage of our cities and our industrial wastes to be poured into our watercourses...The facts show that the pollution of the Niagara River and Lake Erie is frightful in its extent...and that the enormous typhoid death rate of [Niagara Falls, New York] is due almost wholly to the pollution of the public water by the sewage of the city of Buffalo" (*The Outlook*, 1910).

Item: "It is not the general custom for the mothers and wives of Bohemians to go out working; but more and younger children go out to work here...There is a greater demand for child labor in Chicago, the supply for which is recruited from the ranks of the needy families of all nationalities. It is a great temptation of all foreigners to sacrifice their children..." (*Hull House Maps and Papers*, 1895).

Item: "The unskilled widowed mother is unable to support herself and her family at a reasonable standard of living...the work available to such women outside of the home inevitably breaks down the physical, mental, and moral strength of the family and disrupts the home life through an inadequate standard of living and parental neglect..." (*Report of the New York State Commission for Widowed Mothers*, 1914).

Item: "Of all the great social problems of modern times incident to the growth of cities, none is claiming public attention in a greater degree than that of the housing of the working people. Mere housing...providing shelter, does not solve this problem. It only aggravates it by herding men and women together under conditions which inevitably tend to produce disease and crime...The most serious evils [are] insufficiency of light and air...danger from fire...lack of separate water closet and washing facilities...overcrowding...foul cellars and courts..." (*The Tenement House Problem*, 1903).

Item: "The privy vaults were often found to be foul and full to the surface, sinks without trap or vent, the rain conductor serving to carry off waste water; damp, dark, and ill-smelling cellars used for sleeping purposes; cellars filthy; leaky roofs causing the walls and ceilings to become water soaked, rendering the rooms damp and unhealthy; broken and worn floors; broken stair railings...plaster broken and paper torn and dirty" (*Pittsburgh Survey*, 1914).

Item: "Many [Italian] boys and young men arrive at Ellis Island at an age which enables them to escape...school attendance in this country. Working all day among those using only their own dialect, they often go for years without acquiring more than a few English words" (*The Outlook*, 1903).

Item: "It is mainly the children of immigrants who swell the ranks of [the] indigent element in our great cities...[The] amazing criminality of the children of immigrants is almost wholly a product of city life, and it follows directly upon the incapacity of immigrant parents to control their children under city conditions...On the streets and alleys...the children

evade parental discipline, and for them the home is practically non-existent" (*The Chautauquan*, 1904).

Item: "The large corporations, commonly called trusts, though organized in one State, always do business in many States, often doing very little business in the State where they are incorporated. There is utter lack of uniformity in the State laws about them; and as no State has any exclusive interest in or power over their acts, it has in practice proved impossible to get adequate regulation through State action" (President Theodore Roosevelt, 1901).

Item: "Along about 1890 [in St. Louis], public franchises and privileges were sought not only for legitimate profit and common convenience, but for loot. Taking but slight and always selfish interest in the public councils, the big men misused politics. The 'riff-raff' rushed into the Municipal Assembly...and sold the city – its streets, its wharves, its markets...to the now greedy business men and bribers" (*McClure's Magazine*, 1902).

In addition to muckrakers, other contemporaries testified to the quality of life they were living.

* * * * *

A Miner's Story, 1902. I am thirty-five years old, married, the father of four children, and have lived in the coal region all my life. Twenty-three of these years have been spent working in and around the mines. My father was a miner. He died ten years ago from "miners" asthma.

In the fifteen years I have worked as a miner I have earned the average rate of wages any of us coal heavers get. Today I am little better off than when I started to do for myself. I have $100 on hand; I am not in debt; I hope to be able to weather the strike without going hungry.

By years I am only thirty-five. But look at the marks on my body; look at the lines of worriment on my forehead; see the gray hairs on my head and in my mustache; take my general appearance, and you'll think I'm ten years older.

You need not wonder why. Day in and day out, from Monday morning to Saturday evening, between the rising and the setting of the sun, I am in the underground workings of the coal mines.

Our daily life is not a pleasant one. When we put on our oil-soaked suit in the morning we can't guess all the dangers which threaten our lives...We get old quickly. Powder, smoke, after-damp, bad air – all combine to bring furrows to our faces and asthma to our lungs.

In 1890 work was not so plentiful, and by the time our first baby came there was room for much doubt as to how we would pull out. Low wages, and not much over half time in those years, made us hustle. In 1890-90, from June to May, I earned $368.72. That represented eleven months' work, or an average of $33.52 per month. Our rent was $10 per month; store not less than $20. And then I had my oil suits and gum boots to pay for. The result was that after the first year and a half of our married life we were in debt. Not much, of course, and not as much as many of my neighbors, men of larger families, and some who made less money, or in whose case there had had been sickness or accident or death. These are all things which a miner must provide for.

From The Independent, Vol. LIV, No. 2 (1902).

Persisting Questions of History

Analyzing Problems. Make a list of the problems uncovered by the muckrakers. What groups are most likely to be affected by each problem? How would they be affected?

Think about possible solutions to each problem. Who would be responsible for each solution? Make a chart showing possible actions that could be taken and who would take them. An example is provided below for a current problem.

Problem			Solutions		
	Individuals	Voluntary Organizations	Local Government	State Government	Federal Government
Poverty	Contribute to charities Participate in food drives Volunteer at a shelter	Operate a soup kitchen Offer free day care programs for parents who work	Provide a job program Provide financial aid to shelters and food banks	Provide financial aid to families Provide job training	Redistribute wealth from rich to poor Distribute surplus food Tax people to make income equal

Choose one of the problems you have listed, and think about the benefits of implementing solutions at each level of activity. What might the costs be? For example, volunteer action by individuals or groups might increase feelings of social responsibility and make programs more personal and caring, with less red tape. On the other hand, local volunteer problems might not have adequate resources to serve all who are in need; programs might vary greatly from community to community, causing inequities and prompting some poor people to move to locations where there are better benefits.

Do some of the solutions seem better than others? What makes a solution "better"? Develop criteria – for example, cost-effectiveness, humaneness, equitable distribution of resources – for defining better.

Determining Responsibility. How would you judge the quality of life experienced by the miner and his family? To what extent are the miner and his family responsible for their own quality of life? To what extent are mine owners or the government responsible for improving the miners' quality of life? What specific things are beyond the miner's control? Who is responsible for these things?

Comparing Viewpoints. The following excerpt was written by Andrew Carnegie, an immigrant who became a "self-made" millionaire in the steel industry. What is Carnegie's perspective on conditions in the United States? How would he have reacted to the complaints of the muckrakers? Do you agree with Carnegie's perspective?

> The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth, that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship. The conditions of human life have not only been changed, but revolutionized, within the past few hundred years. In former days there was little difference between the dwelling, dress, food, and environment of the chief and those of his retainers. The contrast between the palace of the millionnaire and the cottage of the laborer with us today measures the change which has come with civilization. This change, however, is not to be deplored, but welcomed as highly beneficial. It is well, nay, essential, for the progress of the race that the houses of some should be homes for all that is highest and best in literature and the arts, and for all the refinements of civilization, rather than that none should be so. Much better this great irregularity than universal squalor.
>
> It is easy to see how the change has come. In the manufacture of products we have the whole story. Formerly, articles were manufactured at the domestic hearth, or in small shops which formed part of the household. The master and his apprentices worked side by side, the latter living with the master, and therefore subject to the same conditions.
>
> The inevitable result of such a mode of manufacture was crude articles at high prices. Today the world obtains com-

From The Gospel of Wealth, by Andrew Carnegie (New York, 1900), pp. I-II, 24-27, 32-33, 36-41.

modities of excellent quality at prices which even the preceding generation would have deemed incredible. The poor enjoy what the rich could not before afford.

The price we pay for this salutary change is, no doubt, great. We assemble thousands of operatives in the factory, and in the mine, of whom the employer can know little or nothing, and to whom he is little better than a myth. All intercourse between them is at an end. Rigid castes are formed, and, as usual, mutual ignorance breeds mutual distrust. Under the law of competition, the employer of thousands is forced into the strictest economies, among which the rates paid to labor figure prominently, and often there is friction between the employer and the employed, between capital and labor, between rich and poor. Human society loses homogeneity.

The price which society pays for the law of competition, like the price it pays for cheap comforts and luxuries, is also great; but the advantages of this law are also greater still than its cost—for it is to this law that we owe our wonderful material development, which brings improved conditions in its train. But, whether the law be benign or not, we must say of it: It is here; we cannot evade it; no substitutes for it have been found, and while the law may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department. We accept and welcome, therefore, as conditions to which we must accommodate ourselves, great inequality of environment; the concentration of business, industrial and commercial, in the hands of a few; and the law of competition....

Thus far, accepting conditions as they are, the situation can be surveyed and pronounced good.

Citizens Take Action

As Americans became more aware of social problems (through daily observations as well as muckraking literature), many began to take action. Such reform efforts often began in local voluntary organizations. As you read the passages below, compare the actions of these organizations with the possible solutions you developed after reading about the muckrakers.

* * * * *

City Clubs

Women's clubs in many cities organized campaigns to clean up city streets, to improve public health, to increase the number of public parks and recreational facilities, and to beautify their cities. Fraternal organizations raised money, lobbied, and supported programs to end prostitution. Similarly, antivice commissions, chambers of commerce, taxpayers' associations, law and order leagues, and businessmen's clubs began to exert their influence in the cause of social reform. The purposes of city clubs are described more fully in the excerpt below.

* * * * *

There was a time when it was thought that the citizen's duty to his government ended at the polls....In our day, however, citizens, through their special associations for labor legislation, prison reform, purification of milk supply, and a hundred other public purposes, are threatening to take possession of large fields of legislation and administration by a process of "peaceful penetration." ...The objects of the several clubs...are strikingly similar....The purpose of the Milwaukee Club is "to bring together in intimate association, men, who are sincerely seeking the best interests of our city; to create within the club an ideal of civic betterment, by providing, through addresses at noonday luncheons, through ample literature and otherwise, the best thought of the day in civic matters; to disseminate civic knowledge by newspaper publicity and by bulletins to be published by the club and widely distributed; to promote a spirit of cooperation among the citizens in public matters." ...The Los Angeles club took up such matters as the city charter, the proposed municipal newspaper, the Good Government and Socialist

From "Recent Activities of City Clubs," by Charles A. Beard, in National Municipal Review I (1912), pp. 431-434.

candidates for the school board, single tax, taxation, social hygiene, public baths, and the work of the legal aid society....

Each of the clubs...investigates special local problems and prepares reports of immense practical value....Chicago's City Club through its committees on parks, playgrounds, and baths, and education, has been studying the relation of the public school buildings to the recreational facilities of the parks, and has made some pertinent recommendations to the city authorities to the effect that needless duplications of facilities can be avoided, with decided economy, by the use of park lands for school purposes and the school buildings for recreational purposes. In New York City, the City Club has been specially active in the subway developments and the preservations of City Hall Park.

Jane Addams Describes Hull House

Settlement houses were another type of volunteer organization. Originally an English idea, settlement houses sprang up in virtually every major U.S. city. In the following excerpt, settlement house pioneer Jane Addams describes the philosophy of the Hull House settlement in Chicago. The table on page 20 describes some actual programs undertaken by the University Settlement of New York City.

* * * * *

The Settlement is an experimental effort to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of life in a great city. It insists that these problems are not confined to any one portion of a city. It is an attempt to relieve, at the same time, the overaccumulation at one end of society... [The city's residents] must be content to live quietly side by side with their neighbors, until they grow into a sense of relationship and mutual interests. Their neighbors are held apart by differences of race and language which the residents can more easily overcome. They are bound to see the needs of their neighborhood as a whole, to furnish data for legislation, and to use their influence to secure it. In short, residents are pledged to devote themselves to the duties of good citizenship and to the arousing of the social energies which too largely lie dormant in every neighborhood given over to industrialism....

From Twenty Years at Hull House, by Jane Addams (New York: New American Library, 1910).

Hull House, Chicago's first Social Settlement, was established in September, 1889. It...was opened by two women, supported by many friends, in the belief that the mere foothold of a house, easily accessible, ample in space, hospitable and tolerant in spirit, situated in the midst of the large foreign colonies which so easily isolate themselves in American cities, would be in itself a serviceable thing for Chicago....

This site for a Settlement was selected...because of its diversity and the variety of activity for which it presented an opportunity. It has been the aim of the residents to respond to all sides of the neighborhood life.... One thing seemed clear in regard to entertaining these foreigners: to preserve and keep for them whatever of value their past life contained and to bring them into contact with a better type of Americans. For two years, every Saturday evening, our Italian neighbors were our guests; entire families came...and the house became known as a place where Italians were welcome and where national holidays were observed....

But our social evenings are by no means confined to foreigners. Our most successful clubs are entirely composed of English speaking and American-born young people.... The boys who are known as the Young Citizens' Club are supposed to inform themselves on municipal affairs.... The gymnasium is a somewhat pretentious name for a building next door which was formerly a saloon, but which we rented last fall, repaired, and fitted up with simple apparatus.... The more definite humanitarian effect of Hull House has taken shape in a day nursery.... and a marked improvement has taken place in the scavenger service and in the regulation of the small stables of the ward....

Last May twenty girls from a knitting factory who struck because they were docked for loss of time when they were working by the piece, came directly from the factory to Hull House.... They had heard that we "stood by working people." We were able to have the strike arbitrated... and we have the satisfaction of putting on record one more case of arbitration in the slowly growing list....

I am always sorry to have Hull House regarded as philanthropy, although it doubtless has strong philanthropic tendencies.... Working people live in the same streets with those in need of charity, but they themselves require and want none of it. As one of their number has said, they require only that their aspirations be recognized and stimulated and the means of attaining them put at their disposal. Hull House makes a constant effort to secure these means, but to call that effort philanthropy is to use the word unfairly and to underestimate the duties of good citizenship.

Activities of New York's University Settlement Society

Program	Members	Activities/Purpose
Tenth Ward Social Reform Club	Neighborhood men and women	Entertainment, singing, readings, discussion/social enjoyment
Improvement Club	Girls aged 18-24	Classes in physical culture, dress making, and hygienic home nursing
Neighborhood Guild Cadets	Boys aged 14-16	Business meetings with practice in parliamentary law, gymnastic exercises, military drill, field trips
Potomac Cadets	23 boys aged 11-15	Drill, games, gymnasium, and physical culture for the amusement and general improvement of the members
Mayflower Club	25 young girls	Sewing underwear for small children, to teach the girls a skill as well as the value of being neat, clean, and exact; oral reading and discussion of stories with morals
Order Club	80 boys aged 8-12	Singing, discussions, drill, gymnasium, games
Literary Society	Young men and women	Debates, essays, and other literary exercises
Tenth Ward Sanitary Union	Volunteers	Street and tenement house inspection, filing complaints with Board of Health and other departments, recruiting residents to work for better sanitary condition (cleaning fire escapes, cleaning sinks, closing sweatshops)
Program for the Unemployed		Canvassing neighborhood to get accurate data on unemployment; provision of street sweeping jobs to some unemployed residents; distribution of flour, coal, clothing, and meal tickets

Source: Annual Report for 1894 (New York: University Settlement Society, 1895), pp. 7-9, 12-17, 24-25.

Persisting Questions of History

Evaluating Voluntary Action. The city clubs and settlements were examples of voluntary citizen action to solve problems, a traditional value in American society. List at least three examples of ways these organizations tried to solve problems. Next to each activity, list the problem it was attempting to solve. Did the fact that some working people disdained those who took charity lessen the effectiveness of voluntary actions? Why or why not?

Shelters for the homeless, soup kitchens, volunteer programs for retired people, and "Meals on Wheels" projects are examples of contemporary volunteer citizen actions. List several such programs in your community. What problems are their activities designed to solve? According to your criteria, are they effective? Do current conditions suggest any additional criteria for judging effectiveness?

Based on your analysis, what problems, if any, do you think voluntary action can solve in a large nation such as ours? Why?

Defining the Good Citizen. Jane Addams believed that her efforts at Hull House were part of "the duties of good citizenship."

Working with two or three other students, develop a definition of "the good citizen." What characteristics should the good citizen possess? What activities should he/she become involved in? You may use the following statements to get your discussion started:

- A good citizen uses established legal procedures to influence public policy to secure his/her own interests.
- A good citizen has an image of the ideal society and works in various civic groups dedicated to achieving that idea.
- A good citizen should seriously consider what it is like to be poor and out of work and make civic decisions according to the Golden Rule.
- A good citizen always obeys the law.
- A good citizen is someone who minds his/her own business and doesn't try to change the world.

The Progressives on Education

Settlement house workers and other volunteer reformers paid a great deal of attention to schools. Concerned about acculturating immigrants and combatting poverty, settlement reformers sought to make public education a tool for reform.

In the passage below, Mary Simkhovitch compares the demands on education in rural America and in the urban tenements. The tenement house, which originated in New York City as special housing for the working class, was often a narrow five-story building, with four small apartments per floor. Each apartment typically had four small rooms. When occupied by large families, the apartments were extremely crowded. Tenements housed many large families in these small apartments, and they became rundown and dilapidated.

As you read the excerpt, make note of the purposes for education that Simkhovitch mentions.

* * * * *

The picture of education in our national past from which we are only now beginning to emerge, is too vivid to us all to need portrayal. The physical life of the child was developed through work and free play in ample spaces. The varied life of the seasons on the farm, the long walks to school and church, snowballing, swimming in the pond, all these diversions created physical vigor. The intimate knowledge of birds and trees, the solemn moonrise, the hush of the early dawn, these were the calls of nature to the youthful soul depending its insight. As the boy grew older and work more serious, the variety of training that every day brought to him was indeed manifold. How to plant the garden, get in the hay, build the barn, in fact to know how to meet every difficulty that arose, with efficiency, this is what the discipline of work meant. This method turned out handy men with the adaptability which has made us famous as a nation and which is one of the springs of our economic prosperity. The pleasant hours at singing school, the exciting debate at the academy or lyceum, the church social, the warm winter evening around the fire at home, this was the social life where the ideals of American manhood and womanhood were formed.

From "The Enlarged Function of the Public School," by Mary Simkhovitch, in Thirty-First National Conference of Charities and Correction (Portland, OR: 1904), pp. 471-81, 487.

If we turn from this picture to New York city life and ask ourselves how far the old methods of education are adequate to deal with new conditions, we find changes so vast that no theory is going to meet those changes adequately. Elements of weakness exist in the methods of dealing with the great immigrant population of New York both by the church and by the home. What the churches do to create high ethical standards is something, but...there is little of that feeling of stability which comes about in a village where everyone knows what everybody else is doing, and where practically everybody has some church connection.

With the home the situation is far more important and difficult. The home of the great body of New York's residents is the tenement. To be able to make a home in such surroundings is a wonderful work which many thousands have accomplished by dint of perseverance and courage and ability. But by no means all have been able to withstand the disintegrating influences that infest the congested life of New York. The rooms are so small that most of the members of the family prefer to go out rather than stay in. Where then are those pleasant evenings in the home where the man reads, the woman sews, the children play? They have gone, those pleasant evenings, and they are not likely to return.

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From all over the world New York has gathered in her big household. The habits of the old world soon disappear, the traditions of the past suffer a rude shock, and in the transition from the old to the new, great dramatic and disintegrating changes necessarily take place....

Where does the child get its physical education? Not on the farm but in the street. Instead of the moonrise and the fragrant walks, the boy goes to the theater for fifteen cents. The older sister cannot comfortably see her young man in the crowded tenement, so she meets him at the corner....

If the church and the home prove inadequate to supply that physical, social, and ethical training which the village church and home afford, to what then shall we look?...One instrument we have at hand is adapted to this purpose admirably. It is our educational system.

It was in 1889 that the free lectures were established. The average attendance at each lecture was about two hundred and fifty. One hundred and seventeen lecture centers are maintained with a lecture staff of five hundred. The subjects covered by the lectures are varied in range. "Physiology and Hygiene," "First Aid to the Injured," "Home Nursing and Care of Children," "The Prevention of Consumption [tuberculosis]," "Trade Unions, Why They Came, What They Do," "The Street Cleaning Department," Lectures on Shakespeare and Great Writers of the Nineteenth Century, Seven Courses of Lectures on American History, Lectures on Music and Art.... These lectures were, naturally especially for recently arrived immigrants, and stress was laid upon the rights of a citizen, and the duties of foreigners in their new country.

Other new features carried on are the introduction of baths in the public schools (in 1901). There are however at present only two public school buildings in Greater New York where baths have been installed. The very active use of these baths would certainly indicate the usefulness of their introduction into practically all the schools.

In 1892, libraries were established in the schools in connection with the state. The Department of Health has cooperated with the Department of Education by establishing nurses in the public schools who have greatly brought up the daily attendance by caring for children who have hitherto been excluded principally for eye infection. The nurses have treated pupils both at school and in the homes. The health and morale of the children have been further looked after by the formation of the Public School Athletic league during the past year.

Vacation schools were established by the Board of Education in 1899. These schools lay emphasis upon other features than those of the day school. We find kindergartens, nature study, clay modeling, charcoal drawing, water-coloring, sewing, wood work, iron work, and story telling, the principal features. They serve a double purpose, both caring for the children in the summer and giving them a fresh mental interest, and also indicating where these features can be most satisfactorily introduced into the day school system. The opening of the recreation centers was, perhaps, a more radical departure than the vacation feature.

To recover some sort of a center and bond of fellowship and cooperation, under the changed conditions of life in all our cities and many of our smaller towns, and even country places, has been more and more of a social, political, and moral, not to say, human necessity. For it is those populations which have lost, or never have had, their centers of neighborhood and patriotic cooperation, that have been worst prey of the demagogue, the boss, and the machine gang.

Persisting Questions of History

Change and the Schools. What reasons for public education did Mary Simkhovitch give? Why did differences between rural and urban living suggest a greater need for formal education? How might changes between 1904 and the present require developing yet another purpose for the schools? Base your answer on your own experience.

Evaluating Claims. Simkhovitch supported her belief in education by citing a wide range of positive effects of education. Make a list of these positive or valued consequences. For each, try to develop a strategy for testing the claim. Could you use the strategies developed to determine whether the claims hold up for today's schools?

Determining Who Should Decide on the Purposes of Education. If schools can be an effective tool for making reforms, who should determine what reforms will be addressed by the schools – the students? the teachers and school administrators? parents? the taxpayers who support the schools? the state or national government? Give reasons to support your answer. Who would ensure that the schools were being run in the public interest and not to serve a particular special interest?

Politics in the Cities

The problems that concerned Jane Addams, Mary Simkhovitch, and the many people involved in city clubs and other civic improvement organizations resulted from vast changes taking place in late 19th-century America. Technological changes, immigration, and rapid growth of industries and cities were changing the nation.

In the cities especially, thousands of new households, businesses, and industries strained existing services and created an urgent need for new systems (streets, water, sewers, and gas) as well as more schools, teachers, policemen, firemen, and much, much more. People of the progressive generation asked: Who would decide priorities for public improvements? How would the new demands be financed? How could competing special interests be balanced for the good of all?

* * * * *

The Search for Order in Urban Politics

By the early 20th-century, many people perceived that city governments were obsolete. Economic and social changes had simply outpaced the accepted forms of government. After 1820, most newly adopted city charters copied the basic structure of the U.S. Constitution, with powers separated among the three branches of government. Although variable in detail from place to place, city government typically had a council (legislature) elected from wards or other small electoral districts. In addition, most cities had a mayor (the executive) who was elected through citywide elections. The powers of the mayor were usually quite limited – often only those of veto and appointment. Mayors were often unable to overcome the local interests of the city council members, whose job it was to represent and protect local interests. Citywide problems were therefore difficult to solve.

In addition to these structural problems, city government was handicapped by competition among special interests. As the cities grew, new interests emerged – merchants, manufacturers, contractors, real estate operators. Each of these special interests competed to influence public policy to support their own self-defined needs.

At the same time, some business elites – railroad magnates, bankers, virtually all business people involved in regional or national markets – tended to withdraw from local politics altogether. The absence of politi-

cal leadership from these elites was compounded by the influx of thousands of newly urbanized people, whether native-born Americans or recently-arrived immigrants, each with their own peculiar needs and perspectives. Since there was virtually universal white male suffrage by the middle of the 19th century, these persons could vote for representatives who would protect their interests in city government.

The search for political order in the city took two very broad forms. The first was the growth of the political machine and the "boss"; the machine created its political base among various immigrant and working class communities and some influential business interests. The second was the rise of urban reform movements, which were dedicated to the "principles of good government" and firmly opposed to corruption and immorality. The political rhetoric of the times suggested that the battle between the machine and reformers was a battle between the forces of good and those of evil. Actually, the conflict was between two alternative ways of bringing more order to the city.

Machine Government

Outsiders called it the machine. Insiders called it the organization. Whatever its name, "it" was a political association that controlled the legally established government in many cities. Its primary function (thus the term *machine*) was to turn out the votes necessary to win local elections. Political organizations developed at the ward, precinct, and even the block level. Block leaders, precinct captains, and ward healers were all responsible for maintaining the loyalty of local constituents and turning out the vote on election day. Sometimes in hotly contested elections, the machine used fraudulent methods: voters were encouraged to "vote early and vote often" and the cemetery vote was said to have carried many elections. Most of the time, however, the machine could turn out enough legitimate votes to win an election. In return for the power thus gained, the machine provided services for its loyal supporters. Its supporters were many and varied.

At the top of the social scale were businesspeople interested in developing and then protecting special deals with city government. Utilities of all kinds – streetcar lines, electricity, street cleaning, water – grew by leaps and bounds to keep pace with urban population growth. Utility contracts were given to businesses, which then kicked back money and provided jobs that the machine could dispense to working class supporters. Other businesspeople were interested in securing railroad rights-of-way and building permits, or developing tracts of land for commercial or residential buildings. Virtually every business was inter-

ested in securing special tax exemptions. All these favors could be obtained from the machine – at a price. The special privileges these business people enjoyed were resented by other, competing, business interests. In addition, utility franchises, often monopolies, were seen by many as violating the public interest because streetcar fares and electrical or water costs seemed artificially high.

Next downward on the social scale were merchants, landlords, restauranteurs, grocers, and other small businesspeople who sought governmental favors of various kinds. Licenses, street paving and cleaning, water mains, storm sewers, building permits, and the privilege of ignoring city ordinances and regulations (e.g., blue laws closing saloons on Sunday) could be obtained for a price. In addition, because of the vast number of public building projects, the machine could dispense construction contracts to favored contractors and jobs to loyal workers, again for a price. Many observers began to see such special arrangements as costly, arbitrary, and corrupt.

Even farther down the social scale were recently arrived immigrants and the working poor. These people could expect to get help in finding places to live and work. In addition, they could find help in hard times: food, clothing, rent, coal in winter, or a day job in time of need. Loyal constituents could expect friendly intervention with the police or court

system if they ran afoul of the law. Catholics could even secure support for local parochial schools (despite the prohibitions of the First Amendment).

As Boston ward healer Martin Lomasney told muckraker Lincoln Steffens, "There's got to be in every ward somebody that any bloke can come to – no matter what he's done – and get help. Help, you understand, none of your law and justice, but help." This was the ideology of boss politics – positive government: government to help people, with few questions asked, regardless of who you were, as long as you voted the machine ticket. Many city dwellers held the machine in contempt because of its association with immigrants. Many of the bosses and other machine workers were themselves second-generation immigrants. Even more loathsome to many middle and upper class citizens were the machine's associations with illegal businesses. Brothels, illegal liquor sales, gambling and other vices often received protection from the machines. The police and justice systems were especially important for the machine to control because of the favors they could therefore dispense. In return for failing to see such petty criminality, police officers and judges often received pay-offs, which in turn were shared with the machine. Nothing associated the boss and machine more closely with corruption than these special arrangements.

Questions for Conversation

1. What necessary functions did the ward healer perform? What activities of the machines led to charges of corruption?

2. What do you think is meant by the statement, "problems of city government were the result of being democratic and representative"? Tell why you agree or disagree with this statement.

A Day in the Life of a Machine Politician

In a sense, the urban political boss saw his opportunities and he took them. Machine operators were professional politicians; from their own point of view, they were businessmen on the make, just like people in other businesses. Their stock in trade was political influence. While the machine was not staffed by disinterested public servants motivated by an image of the "ideal city," machine politicans were not simply greedy plunderers of the public treasury either. Bosses provided real and needed services to their constituents, acting as brokers for the competing special interests that comprised the city.

The following excerpt about New York City machine politician George Washington Plunkitt suggests a number of reasons why the machine could stay in power.

* * * * *

The life of the Tammany [a New York City political machine] district leader is strenuous. To his work is due the wonderful recuperative power of the organization.

One year it goes down in defeat and the prediction is made that it will never again raise its head. The district leader, undaunted by defeat, collects his scattered forces, organizes them as only Tammany knows how to organize, and in a little while the organization is as strong as ever.

No other politician in New York or elsewhere is exactly like the Tammany district leader or works as he does. As a rule, he has no business or occupation other than politics. He plays politics every day and night in the year, and his headquarters bears the inscription, "Never closed."

Everybody in the district knows him. Everybody knows where to find him, and nearly everybody goes to him for assistance of one sort or another, especially the poor of the tenements.

He is always obliging. He will go to the police courts to put in a good word for the "drunks and disorderlies" or pay their fines, if a good word is not effective. He will attend christenings, weddings, and funerals. He will feed the hungry and help bury the dead.

From Plunkitt of Tammany Hall, by William Riordon (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1905).

A philanthropist? Not at all. He is playing politics all the time.

Brought up in Tammany Hall, he has learned how to reach the hearts of the great mass of voters. He does not bother about reaching their heads. It is his belief that arguments and campaign literature have never gained votes.

He seeks direct contact with the people, does them good turns when he can, and relies on their not forgetting him on election day. His heart is always in his work, too, for his subsistence [job] depends on its results [i.e., winning the election].

If he holds his district and Tammany is in power, he is amply rewarded by a good office and the opportunities that go with it. What these opportunities are has been shown by the quick rise to wealth of so many Tammany district leaders....

This is a record of a day's work by Plunkitt:

2 a.m.: Aroused from sleep by the ringing of his door bell; went to the door and found a bartender, who asked him to go to the police station and bail out a saloon-keeper who had been arrested for violating the excise law. Furnished bail and returned to bed at three o'clock.

6 a.m.: Awakened by fire engines passing his house. Hastened to the scene of the fire, according to the custom of the Tammany district leaders, to give assistance to the fire sufferers, if needed. Met several of his election district captains who are always under orders to look out for fires, which are considered great vote-getters. Found several tenants who had been burned out, took them to a hotel, supplied them with clothes, fed them, and arranged temporary quarters for them until they could rent and furnish new apartments.

8:30 a.m.: Went to the police court to look after his constituents. Found six "drunks." Secured the discharge of four by a timely word with the judge, and paid the fines of two.

9 a.m.: Appeared in the Municipal District Court. Directed one of his district captains to act as counsel for a widow against whom dispossess proceedings had been instituted and obtained an extension of time. Paid the rent of a poor family about to be dispossessed and gave them a dollar for food.

11 a.m.: At home again. Found four men waiting for him. One had been discharged by the Metropolitan Railway Company for neglect of duty, and wanted the district leader to fix things. Another wanted a job on the road. The third sought a place on the Subway and the fourth, a plumber, was looking for work with the Consolidated Gas Company. The district leader spent nearly three hours fixing things for the four men, and succeeded in each case.

3 p.m.: Attended the funeral of an Italian as far as the ferry. Hurried back to make his appearance at the funeral of a Hebrew constituent. Went conspicuously to the front both in the Catholic church and the synagogue, and later attended the Hebrew confirmation ceremonies in the synagogue.

7 p.m.: Went to district headquarters and presided over a meeting of election district captains. Each captain submitted a list of all the voters in his district, reported on their attitude toward Tammany, suggested who might be won over and how they could be won, told who were in need, and who were in trouble of any kind and the best way to reach them. District leader took notes and gave orders.

8 p.m.: Went to a church fair. Took chances on everything, bought ice-cream for the young girls and the children. Kissed the little ones, flattered their mothers and took their fathers out for something down at the corner.

9 p.m.: At the club-house again. Spent $10 on tickets for a church excursion and promised a subscription for a new church-bell. Bought tickets for a base-ball game to be played by two nines from his district. Listened to the complaints of a dozen push-cart peddlers who said they were persecuted by the police and assured them he would go to Police Headquarters in the morning and see about it.

10:30 p.m.: Attended a Hebrew wedding reception and dance. Had previously sent a handsome wedding present to the bride.

12 p.m.: In bed.

That is the actual record of one day in the life of Plunkitt. He does some of the same things every day, but his life is not so monotonous as to be wearisome.

Persisting Questions of History

Analyzing Services. Plunkitt supplied a number of services for his constituents. Make a list of these services and then find out how they are handled in your community. Apply the criteria you developed for a good government to the way in which your community supplies services. Does your community's government better meet the definition of a good government than the machine? Discuss your views on this question with your classmates.

Defining Good Government. How would you define *good government*? Some people would argue that good government is honest, representative, and disinterested. Others might say that it is efficient, responsive, and balances the demands of various special interests. Develop your own list of criteria for good government. According to your criteria, in what ways were Plunkitt's activities examples of good government? In what ways were his activities not good government?

Comparing Schools and Cities. Are schools responsive to the needs of students and parents? What kinds of demands do students and parents make on teachers and administrators? In what ways are the responses of school officials similar to or different from those of a city boss?

The Language of Urban Reform

Though the machines provided services essential to some groups, this outraged many other groups, who eventually sought to reform urban government.

According to historian Samuel P. Hays, "the source of support for reform in municipal government did not come from the lower or middle classes, but from the upper class." Some of the leading business groups in each city typically led the movement for municipal reform. While they often spoke of "the people" against "the interests" or "good government" versus "corruption," municipal reform was often different than such rhetoric might suggest. As you read the excerpts below, list the reforms being advocated. Are they in the public interest or do the proposed changes serve only special private interests?

* * * * *

Item: "The opposition to bad government usually comes to a head in the local chamber of commerce. Business men finally acquire the conviction that the growth of their city is being seriously impaired by the failure of city officials to perform their duties efficiently. Looking about for a remedy, they are captivated by the resemblance of the city-manager plan to their corporate form of business organization" (Leonard White, *The City Manager*, 1927, pp. ix-x).

Item: "A man's occupation ought to give a strong indication of his qualifications for membership on a school board...Employment as ordinary laborer and in the lowest class of mill work would naturally lead to the conclusion that such men did not have sufficient education or business training to act as school directors...Objection might also be made to small shopkeepers, clerks, workmen at many trades, who by lack of educational advantages and business training, could not, no matter how honest, be expected to administer properly the affairs of an educational system, requiring special knowledge, and where millions are spent each year" (1911 Voters' League of Pittsburgh pamphlet).

Item: "The spirit of sectionalism had dominated the political life of every city. Ward pitted against ward, alderman against alderman, and legislation only effected by 'log-rolling' extravagant measures into operation, mulcting the city, but gratifying the greed of constituents, has too long stung the conscience of decent citizenship. This constant treaty-making of factionalism has been no less than a curse. The city manager

plan proposed the commendable thing of abolishing wards. The plan is not unique in this for it has been common to many forms of commission government...The abolition of wards is without doubt an innovation of profound value...The vicious system of patronage, of 'log-rolling' and of selecting officials proposed by powerful aldermen for positions in the city government are all attendant evils upon treating the city, not as a unit, but as a conglomeration of disjointed and unrelated heterogeneous parts...The new officers are elected each to represent all the people" (Harry Toulmin, *The City Manager*, New York: 1915, p. 42).

Item: "Our present system has excluded in large degree the representation of those who have the city's well-being most at heart. It has brought in municipalities...a government established by the least educated, the least interested class of citizens....It stands to reason that a man paying $5,000 taxes in a town is more interested in the well-being and development of his town than the man who pays no taxes ...It equally stands to reason that the man of the $5,000 tax should be assured a representation in the committee which lays the tax and spends the money which he contributes...Shall we be truly democratic and give the property owner a fair show or shall we develop a tyranny of ignorance which shall crush him" (quoted in Clinton Woodruff, *City Government by Commission*, New York: 1911, pp. 207-08).

Item: "Politically, democracy means the sovereignty, not of the average man—who is a rather narrow, shortsighted, muddle-headed creature—but of a matured public opinion, a very different thing...With modern facilities for influencing mind, democracy, at its best, substitutes the direction of the recognized moral and intellectual elite for the rule of the strong, the rich, or the privileged...Let the people harken a little less to commercial magnates and a little more to geologists, economists, physicians, teachers and social workers (Edward A. Ross, *Changing America*, New York: 1912, pp. 4-5, 106).

Item: "...It has ever been my conviction that one of the weakest links in governmental progression of our country...is the confused, irrational, and improvident conduct of city business, almost universally prevalent....The government of our municipalities, large and small, should be on an honest, efficient, business basis, nonpolitical, nonpartisan, nonsectarian; not of bosses nor by classes, but for the masses."

The cornerstones of city government should be (paraphrased):

- Absolute elimination of partisan politics.

- Business administration.
- Qualifications for appointment to public office.
- A dollar's return for every dollar spent.
- All contracts let to lowest responsible bidder.
- Strict adherence to Civil Service merit system.
- Adequate care of the city's dependents.
- Sound moral, civic, physical, and technical education.
- Plenty of playgrounds and other breathing spaces for the city's poor. (Rudolph Blankenburg, address in December, 1915)

Persisting Questions of History

Analyzing Reforms. Below are a number of suggested reforms in urban government. Which do you think were in the public interest? Which do you think supported special interests? Which showed trust in "the people" and which placed greater trust in elites.

	Public Interest	Special Interest	Trust in People	Trust in Elites
City Manager plan (running government like a business)				
Requiring specific educational qualification to hold public office				
Procedures by which citizens could enact laws or remove leaders from office				
Elimination of wards				
Larger role for the wealthy or well-educated "experts"				
Nonpartisan elections				

Which of these reforms would you have supported?

Defining Good Government. On page 36, Rudolph Blankenburg, a former mayor, set forth what he saw as the cornerstones of good urban government. Do you agree with these principles? What benefits would running a government according to these principles have? What would the costs be? Suggest changes in the list to address the costs you identified.

Identifying Special Interests. Think about the needs of the following persons likely to be found in a late 19th-century city:

- A railroad executive.
- A meat-packing plant owner.
- A factory worker.
- A recently arrived Catholic immigrant.
- A middle class woman.
- A 14-year-old farm boy who recently moved to the city.
- A distributor of Standard Oil Company kerosene.
- A 73-year-old woman or man.
- A retail merchant.
- A saloonkeeper.
- An unemployed, unskilled laborer.

What needs might these people have in common?

What special needs or interests might some of them have?

What could they do to advance or protect their general (shared) and special interests?

Steffens and Lippmann on Corruption

Two journalists who wrote about corruption and city government were Lincoln Steffens and Walter Lippmann. The excerpts below are from The Shame of the Cities, *by muckraker Steffens and* Drift and Mastery, *in which Lippmann sought to explain why Americans were getting so stirred up about muckraking and corruption. As you read these two excerpts, try to decide what exactly was meant by corruption and who was responsible for corruption in city government.*

* * * * *

Lincoln Steffens

President [Theodore] Roosevelt has been sneered at for going about the country preaching, as a cure for our American evils, good conduct in the individual, simple honesty, courage, and efficiency. "Platitudes!" the sophisticated say. Platitudes? If my observations have been true, the literal adoption of Mr. Roosevelt's reform scheme would result in a revolution, more radical and terrible to existing institutions...than socialism or even than anarchy. Why, that would change all of us – not alone our neighbors, not alone the grafters, but you and me....

We are pathetically proud of our democratic institutions and our republican form of government, of our grand Constitution and our just laws. We are a free and sovereign people, we govern ourselves and the government is ours. But that is the point. We are responsible, not our leaders, since we follow them. We *let* them divert our loyalty from the United States to some "party"; we *let* them boss the party and turn our municipal democracies into autocracies and our republican nation into a plutocracy....True, they pass for us strict laws, but we are content to let them pass also bad laws, giving away public property in exchange; and our good, and often impossible, laws we allow to be used for oppression and blackmail. And what can we say? We break our own laws and rob our own government, the lady at the custom-house, the lyncher with his rope, and the captain of industry with his bribe and his rebate. The spirit of graft and of lawlessness is the American spirit.

The people are not innocent. That is the only "news" in all the journalism of these articles....

From The Shame of the Cities, by Lincoln Steffens (Chicago: McClure, Phillips, 1904), pp. 4-12; 14-16.

Walter Lippmann

Why, to begin with, should politicians have been attacked so fiercely? Some people would say flatly: because politicians were dishonest. Yet this is an utterly unfounded generalization. The morals of politicians cannot by any stretch of the imagination be described as exceptionally bad. Politicians were on the make. To be sure. But who in this sunny land isn't? They gave their relatives and friends pleasant positions. What father doesn't do that for his son if he can, and with every feeling of righteousness? They helped their friends, they were loyal to those who had helped them: who will say that in private life these are not admirable virtues? And what were the typical grafts in politics – the grafts for which we tried to send politicians to jail? The city contracts for work, and the public official is in league with the contractor; but railroads also contract for work, and corporation officials are at least as frequently as politicians, financially interested in the wrong side of the deal. The city buys real estate, and the city official manages to buy it from himself or his friends. But railroad directors have been known to sell their property to the road they govern.

We can see, I think, what people meant by the word graft. They did not mean robbery. It is rather confused rhetoric to call a grafter a thief. His crime is not that he filches money from the safe but that he betrays a trust. The grafter is a man whose loyalty is divided and whose motives are mixed. A lawyer who takes a fee from both sides in some case; a public official who serves a private interest; a railroad director who is also a director in the supply company; a policeman in league with outlawed vice: those are the relationships which the American people denounce as "corrupt." The attempt to serve at the same time two antagonistic interests is what constitutes "corruption."

The crime is serious in proportion to the degree of loyalty that we expect. A President of the United States who showed himself too friendly to some private interest would be denounced, though he may not have made one cent out of the friendship. But where we have not yet come to expect much loyalty we do very little muckraking. So if you inquired into the ethics of the buyer in almost any manufacturing house, you would find him doing things daily that would land the purchasing agent of a city in jail.

From Drift and Mastery, by Walter Lippmann (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1914; reprint Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985)

That is because we expect more of the politician. We say in effect that no public servant must allow himself to follow the economic habits of his countrymen. The corrupt politician is he who brings into public service the traditions of a private career....

The average American will condemn in an alderman what in his partner he would consider reason for opening a bottle of champagne. In literal truth the politician is attacked for displaying the morality of his constituents. You might if you didn't understand the current revolution, consider that hypocrisy. It isn't: it is one of the hopeful signs of the age. For it means that unconsciously men regard some of the interests of life as too important for the intrusion of commercial ethics.

But the fact that a public official took no bribe soon ceased to shield him from popular attack. Between the honest adherent of machine politics and the corruptionist himself the muckrakers made no sharp distinction. And that was because they had in a vague way come to expect positive action from men in office. They looked for better school systems, or health campaigns, or a conservation policy, that is for fairly concrete social measures, and officials who weren't for them were lumped together and denounced.

I suppose that from the beginning of the republic people had always expected their officials to work at a level less self-seeking than that of ordinary life. So that corruption in politics could never be carried on with an entirely good conscience. But at the opening of this century, democratic people had begun to see much greater possibilities in the government than ever before. They looked to it as a protector from economic tyranny and as the dispenser of the prime institutions of democratic life.

But when they went to the government, what they found was a petty and partisan, slavish and blind, clumsy and rusty instrument for their expectations. That added to the violence of their attacks. When they had no vision of what a democratic state might do, it didn't make so very much difference if officials took a rake-off. The cost of corruption was only a little money, and perhaps the official's immortal soul. But when men's vision of government enlarged, then the cost of corruption and inefficiency rose: for they meant a blighting of the whole possibility of the state. There has always been corruption in American politics, but it didn't worry people very much, so long as the sphere of government was narrowly limited. Corruption became a real problem when reform through state action began to take hold of men's thought.

Persisting Questions of History

Defining Corruption. Think about the distinction Lippmann makes between a thief and a grafter. Do you agree that the seriousness of a crime depends on the extent to which a trust is violated? Think about this question as you try to determine which offender in the pairs below should receive the harsher punishment.

Who should receive the harsher punishment?

A lawyer who represents an injured worker in a lawsuit against a company in which the lawyer holds stock	or	A person who robs a convenience store
A police officer who takes payoffs from drug dealers in exchange for not arresting them	or	A drug dealer
A city council member who votes for a city ordinance that will result in large profits for a company owned by her husband	or	A bookkeeper who embezzles money from the business of the council member's husband
A Senator who pays the son of a campaign contributor a large salary even though he does no actual work	or	A person who writes bad checks on a regular basis.

Determining Responsibility. Do you agree or disagree with the proposition that the misgovernment *of* the American people was largely *by* the American people? Is your view similar to or different from these contemporary views:

> The American people deserve the government they get. They don't vote in primaries, and then they complain about the candidates. They don't vote in the general election, but they gripe about who won. Not only that, but they don't want politicians or government workers to get raises, so the smartest and most capable people won't even seek office. They can make more money in private industry. We deserve the leaders we have.
>
> The current state of our government is the fault of the two-party system, the mass media, and special-interest groups. It's impossible for anyone with really new ideas to rise in one of the major parties because they maintain a party line acceptable to the special-interest groups that are paying the bills. Because of television, it's so expensive to run for office that you just can't do it successfully unless you have party backing (including the special-interest group funds that go with it) or you're incredibly wealthy yourself.

Evaluating Expectations. Do you think it is acceptable for citizens to attack politicians, business people, or other public figures for displaying a morality similar to their own? Consider the following cases in discussing this question. For each case, decide whether you think the behavior reflects morals similar to those of the average citizen. If so, should such behavior be considered acceptable when engaged in by public officials?

The Department of Housing and Urban Development. Late in 1989, scandal racked the department, when it became known that former HUD officials and prominent Republicans had received millions in consulting fees from developers involved in HUD-subsidized projects. Former secretary of the Interior James Watt admitted making $400,000 from 1984 to 1986; he "earned" the money by using his influence to help developers get HUD contracts. One former HUD official, Joseph Strauss, said it was "widely known and widely accepted" that developers needed "very heavy-hitter political connections" to win such contracts.

Jim Wright. The former Speaker of the House, a Democratic representative from Texas, resigned from office after the House Ethics Committee charged him with 69 violations. The Committee said that to evade House limits on outside income, Wright's book was sold in bulk to groups in lieu of speaking fees; Wright received a 55 percent royalty on the bulk orders, far higher than the payment most authors receive. In ad-

dition, Wright was charged with receiving gifts from a supporter who had an interest in legislation and thus could not, by law, give Wright gifts worth more than $100 per year. The gifts included free housing, a salary paid to Wright's wife, and a free car, none of which were disclosed on Wright's financial forms.

Gary Hart. In 1987, polls showed that Senator Hart was the frontrunner to be the Democratic presidential nominee in 1988. His chances plummetted when his affair with a young single woman became public knowledge. Hart was married.

John Tower. President George Bush nominated Tower to be the secretary of defense. A former senator, Tower had a reputation as a heavy drinker and "womanizer." After leaving the Senate, Tower had become an arms negotiator for the United States. He left the arms talks to become a high-paid consultant to companies making the very weapons systems on which the arms talks focused. The Senate refused to confirm Tower as the secretary of defense.

The Jungle

Even while working tirelessly for change at the local, city, and state levels, many reformers began to focus on the federal government. The nature of some problems seemed to necessitate federal action: tariff reform, regulation of big business, national banking reform, conservation policies, women's suffrage, and income tax.

The overriding problem attacked by reformers of the progressive era was the exploitation of masses of citizens by giant business interests wielding unbridled power. Two different kinds of federal efforts were made to control the giant corporations. First, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act was passed to try to break corporations into smaller units and encourage more genuine competition. Second, efforts were made to legislate and enforce product standards—that is, to protect the consumer from inferior or mislabeled products. This second approach is commonly known as consumer protection.

One of the first major battles for consumer protection was over federal meat inspection and a related issue, the adulteration of foods and drugs. These issues came to public attention partly as a result of a book written by a young American Socialist, Upton Sinclair. Sinclair's novel, The Jungle, *awakened sympathy for the workers in the Chicago slaughtering industry. A major character in* The Jungle *was a worker named Jurgis. In one section, Sinclair describes Jurgis's observations of the handling of cattle.*

* * * * *

It seemed that he was working in the room where the men prepared the beef for canning, and the beef had lain in vats full of chemicals, and men with great forks speared it out and dumped it into trucks, to be taken to the cooking-room. When they had speared out all they could reach, they emptied the vat on the floor, and then with shovels scraped up the balance and dumped it into the truck. This floor was filthy, yet they set Antanas with his mop slopping the "pickle" into a hole that connected with a sink, where it was caught and used over again forever; and if that were not enough, there was a trap in the pipe, where all the scraps of meat and odds and ends of refuse were caught, and every few days it was the old man's task to clean these out, and shovel their contents into one of the trucks with the rest of the meat!

From The Jungle, by Upton Sinclair (New York: Doubleday, 1906).

All of these were sinister incidents; but they were trifles compared to what Jurgis saw with his own eyes before long. One curious thing he had noticed, the very first day, in his profession of shoveller of guts; which was the sharp trick of the floor-bosses whenever there chanced to come a "slunk" calf. Any man who knows anything about butchering knows that the flesh of a cow that is about to calve, or has just calved, is not fit for food. A good many of these came every day to the packing-houses – and, of course, if they had chosen, it would have been an easy matter for the packers to keep them till they were fit for food. But for the saving of time and fodder, it was the law that cows of that sort came long with the others, and whoever noticed it would tell the boss, and the boss would start up a conversation with the government inspector, and the two would stroll away. So in a trice the carcass of the cow would be cleaned out, and the entrails would have vanished; it was Jurgis's task to slide them; into the trap, calves and all, and on the floor below they took out these "slunk" calves, and butchered them for meat, and used even the skins of them.

One day a man slipped and hurt his leg; and that afternoon, when the last of the cattle had been disposed of, and the men were leaving, Jurgis was ordered to remain and do some special work which this injured man had usually done. It was late, almost dark, and the government inspectors had all gone, and there were only a dozen or two of men on the floor. That day they had killed about four thousand cattle, and these cattle had come in freight trains from far states, and some of

them had got hurt. There were some with broken legs, and some with gored sides; there were some that had died, from what cause no one could say; and they were all to be disposed of, here in darkness and silence. "Downers," the men called them; and the packing-house had a special elevator upon which they were raised to the killing-beds, where the gang proceeded to handle them, with an air of businesslike nonchalance which said plainer than any words that it was a matter of everyday routine. It took a couple of hours to get them out of the way, and in the end Jurgis saw them go into the chilling-rooms with the rest of the meat, being carefully scattered here and there so that they could not be identified. When he came home that night he was in a very somber mood, having begun to see at last how those might be right who had laughed at him for his faith in America.

In another section, the author describes the use of spoiled meat:

It was only when the whole ham was spoiled that it came into the department of Elzbieta. Cut up by the two-thousand-revolutions-a-minute flyers, and mixed with half a ton of other meat, no odor that ever was in a ham could make a difference. There was never the least attention paid to what was cut up for sausage; there would come all the way back from Europe old sausage that had been rejected, and that was moldy and white – it would be dosed with borax and glycerine, and dumped into the hoppers, and made over again for home consumption. There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had tramped and spit uncounted billions of consumption germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it. It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but a man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together.

There was no place for the men to wash their hands before they ate their dinner, and so they made a practice of washing them in the water that was to be ladled into the sausage. There were the butt-ends of smoked meat, and the scraps of corned beef, and all the odds and ends of the waste of the plants that would be dumped into old barrels in the cellar and left there. Under the system of rigid economy which the packers enforced, there were some jobs that it only paid to do once in a long time, and among these was the cleaning out of the wastebarrels. Every spring they did it; and in the barrels would be dirt and rust and old nails

and stale water – and cart load after cart load of it would be taken out to the public's breakfast. Some of it they would make into "smoked" sausage – but as the smoking took time, and was therefore expensive, they would call upon their chemistry department, and preserve it with borax and color it with gelatine to make it brown. All of their sausage came out of the same bowl, but when they came to wrap it they would stamp some of it "special," and for this they would charge two cents more a pound....

The people of Chicago saw the government inspectors in Packingtown, and they all took that to mean that they were protected from diseased meat; they did not understand that these 163 inspectors had been appointed at the request of the packers, and that they were paid by the United States government to certify that all the diseased meat was kept in the state. They had no authority beyond that; for the inspection of meat to be sold in the city and state the whole force in Packingtown consisted of three henchmen of the local political machine!

And shortly afterward one of these, a physician, made the discovery that the carcasses of steers which had been condemned as tubercular by the government inspectors, and which therefore contained ptomaines, which are deadly poisons, were left upon an open platform and carted away to be sold in the city; and so he insisted that these carcasses be treated with an injection of kerosene – and was ordered to resign the same week! So indignant were the packers that they went farther, and compelled the mayor to abolish the whole bureau of inspection; so that since then there has not been even a pretense of any interference with the graft. There was said to be two thousand dollars a week hush-money from the tubercular steers alone; and as much again from the hobs which had died of cholera on the trains, and which you might see any day being loaded into box-cars and hauled away to a place called Globe, in Indiana, where they made a fancy grade of lard.

Jurgis heard of these things little by little, in the gossip of those who were obliged to perpetrate them. It seemed as if every time you met a person from a new department, you heard of new swindles and new crimes. There was, for instance, a Lithuanian who was a cattle-butcher for the plant where Marija had worked, which killed meat for canning only; and to hear this man describe the animals which came to his place would have been worth while for a Dante or a Zola. It seemed that they must have agencies all over the country, to hunt out old and crippled and diseased cattle to be canned. There were cattle which had been fed on "whiskey-malt," the refuse of the breweries, and had become what

the men called "steerly" – which means covered with boils. It was a nasty job killing these, for when you plunged your knife into them they would bust and splash foul-smelling stuff into your face, and when a man's sleeves were smeared with blood, and his hands steeped in it, how was he ever to wipe his face, or to clear his eyes so that he could see? it was stuff such as this that made the "embalmed beef" that had killed several times as many United States soldiers as all the bullets of the Spaniards; only the army beef, besides, was not fresh canned, it was old stuff that had been lying for years in the cellars.

Up to a year or two ago it had been the custom to kill horses in the yards – ostensibly for fertilizer; but after long agitation the newspapers had been able to make the public realize that the horses were being canned. Now it was against the law to kill horses in Packingtown, and the law was really complied with – for the present, at any rate. Any day, however, one might see sharp-horned and shaggy-haired creatures running with the sheep – and yet what a job you would have to get the public to believe that a good part of what it buys for lamb and mutton is really goat's flesh!

* * * * *

Among those who read Sinclair's description of the meat-packing houses was President Theodore Roosevelt. In early 1906 President Roosevelt named a commission to investigate conditions in the meat industry. The commission reported that the situation was even worse than Sinclair had described it.

At this time there were bills in Congress for both a federal meat inspection law and a pure food and drug law. Meat-packing interests had succeeded in blocking the meat inspection bill. But when Roosevelt made public some of the commission's findings, the sale of canned meat dropped by one-half.

By June of 1906 public shock and anger over food processing practices were running high. Public pressure finally succeeded in forcing Congress to pass both the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act.

The latter prohibited the sale of harmful foods and ordered that both foods and medicines be correctly labeled. While these laws did not correct all of the abuses, and much more strict legislation was to follow, reformers considered them "a step in the right direction."

Persisting Questions of History

Identifying Interests. Sinclair wrote *The Jungle* to expose the working and living conditions of the working class, not primarily to advocate consumer protection. Virtually nothing happened to correct the problems of the working class, but a vast outcry was heard for consumer protection. How might you account for this reaction? Would you say that people are more likely to take action because of altruism (concern for others) or self-interest? Is self-interest a good guide for human action?

Determining Responsibility. In the early days of the United States, it was commonly believed that the government that governs least governs best. During the progressive era, this principle came under attack.

Reformers charged that people's lives were being run by large corporations. Only through action by the federal government, they said, could the problems created by these corporations be solved. The federal government began taking an active role in regulating big business through conservation programs, antitrust suits to break up monopolies, formation of the Federal Trade Commission to restrict monopolistic practices, and passage of such legislation as the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act.

Do you agree that the problems of the progressive era could only be solved through federal action? What criteria might you develop to determine what level of government should be involved in a problem? Given the problems with state and local government during the progressive era, could these agencies be trusted to take any action to solve problems? Are state and local government more trustworthy and effective today? Why or why not?

Analyzing the Graduated Income Tax. In the early 1900s, it was often stated that more than 80 percent of the wealth of the United States was in the hands of about 1 percent of the people. Reformers began asking:

> Should not those who have more money be required to pay more to support the government and its services in behalf of all the people?

The result was a proposal for a progressive or graduated personal income tax based upon the ability to pay. Those making the highest in-

comes would pay the highest percentage of their incomes in tax. By the 1970s, tax rates ranged from 14 percent of income for those making the least amount of money (for example, $145 tax on an income of $1,000) to 55 percent for those in the upper income brackets ($55,490 tax on an income of $100,000).

Opponents of the tax – both in 1913 and in the years that followed – concentrated on making it as gentle as they could. As a result, income tax measures were hedged with exemptions and deductions – all designed to give special groups of payers smaller tax bills and often resulting in high earners paying very little tax. Tax reforms under the Reagan administration eliminated many deductions and reduced the number of tax rates to only two – 15 percent or 28 percent. For 1988, the cutoff between the two rates for a single person was $17,850.

Do you think that the progressive, or graduated, income tax is a fair method of taxing people? In answering the question, consider the extent to which you think the following alternatives to the graduated tax are more or less fair:

- straight percentage of taxable income
- graduated income tax
- sales tax
- property tax
- tax on business profits
- tax on capital gains (increased value of stocks or business properties)
- inheritance tax

Regulating the Food Industry

An early crusader in the fight for better regulation of the food industry was a chemist named Harvey Washington Wiley. From 1883 until 1912, Dr. Wiley was chief chemist of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dr. Wiley was deeply involved in the 1905 congressional fight over the pure food and drug bill. In his autobiography he described this historic legislative battle.

* * * * *

Dr. Wiley's Crusade

The whole power of the lobby against pure food centered in an attack on the bill. The committee rooms were jammed with attorneys for the canning industries using preservatives in food manufacturing, for drug and whiskey interests, and for proprietary medicine venders, pleading that exemptions under the act be extended to the products of their clients, that the law was too harsh and would ruin business, that other laws should be passed instead, and that the pure food and drug law was an act of insanity anyhow.

One of the most spectacular of the witnesses against the bill was a doctor employed by the National Food Manufacturers Association, who made a strenuous plea in behalf of the use of preservatives in foods. His word-for-word testimony is illuminating as to the type of arguments used in a last-ditch attempt to prevent the passage of the bill:

"Where the use of preservatives in foods has been stopped, the death rate has risen," he said. "Two notable illustrations have occurred recently. In North Dakota, the state of pure food – Senator McCumber's state – they tried the experiment. In Germany particularly in Berlin, they tried the same experiment. These two places were put up as tests. I predicted that the death rate in both these places would rise fifty per cent. In that year. Now, what are the official figures? The official figures given by the Board of Health of North Dakota and the figures of the German government in their own publications show that they transcended my prediction; that the deaths were nearly three times as many as they were during the same period the year before. I predicted it would occur if they stopped the use of preservatives, and it did occur."

From Harvey W. Wiley, An Autobiography (New York: Bobbs Merrill Company, 1930). Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

...no such statistics existed.

Certain manufacturers fought hard to have incorporated in the bill a ruling that knowledge on the part of dealers and manufacturers as to the nature and extent of the adulteration or misbranding should be required before the law could be violated. This would have made it very difficult to enforce the law, since it would have been impossible to establish proof of guilt. Strenuous attempts were made to remove the bill from the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture, and particularly from that of the Bureau of Chemistry. Numerous amendments were offered that would have rendered the law ineffective. We stood our ground and met the enemy at least as vigorously as they met us.

Enforcement of pure food laws did not always follow their enactment. Years after the pure food laws were passed Dr. Wiley wrote:

No attempt is made...to control the bleaching of flour, yet under the food law the bleaching of flour is declared an offense against the law. Similarly, no attempt is made at the present day to prevent the addition of benzoate of soda to a food product as a preservative, although its use is prohibited under the law. Likewise, no restriction is made at the present time against the use of saccharin in foods, largely because the attempts to restrict its use were made in such a bungling manner as not to secure approval of the jury before which the trials were made. Alum can be put in foods without restriction, although all other countries have ruled that alum is an adulterant.

The Case of Cuforhedake Brane-Fude

Virtually all the champions of pure food and drugs praised the Act of 1906. A New York Times editorial said that "the purity and honesty of the food and medicines of the people are guaranteed." The American Medical Association felt that the law was "far better in every respect" than any of its advocates could have imagined. The Nation predicted a "death blow" to harmful medicines.

With respect to patent medicines, the law required that manufacturers put truthful labels on their packages. It did not have to be the whole truth. To be certain, the presence of some dangerous drugs – alcohol, the opiates, chloral hydrate, acetanilid, and several others – had to be stated on the package. Other ingredients – one chemist estimated that 46 harmful or poisonous chemicals required no mention on labels – did not have to be listed. In addition, if a label claimed that a substance was not in the medicine, then tests had to show it was not. By the law's definition, a medicine was adulterated "if its strength or purity fall below the professed standard under which it is sold." In addition, the maker could not put "any statement, design, or device" on the label which was "false or misleading in any particular." In the words of historian Harvey Young, "keep quiet on the label or do not lie, the law said."

The first court action under the Pure Food and Drug Act pitted the federal government against the maker of a headache remedy quaintly named Cuforhedake Brane-Fude. This case illustrates the difficulties of dealing fairly and effectively with consumer protection.

* * * * *

The trial began in February 1908, thirteen months after passage of the act. After puzzling about which of the many violations of the law should be tackled first, the Bureau of Chemistry chose to pursue the patent medicine industry. Brane-Fude seemed a particularly good case since there were questions about the accuracy of its labels, its very name suggested the drug could do more than was possible, and some of its contents were claimed to be poisonous by the muckrakers. Furthermore, Brane-Fude's maker was no fly-by-night operator, but a wealthy and upstanding citizen. A court ruling against this man would make other manufacturers take notice.

Robert N. Harper, a trained pharmacist, had been making Brane-Fude since 1888. At the time, medicines for fever reduction and pain kill-

ing were largely experimental, but several derivatives of coal tar were found to do the trick. One, acetanilid, was discovered to reduce fever and deaden pain. Harper used this substance as the basis for his concoction. To 1908, he had sold over two million bottles of his remedy.

Harper was no charlatan. Soon after the Pure Food and Drug Act was passed, he went to the Bureau of Chemistry to try to discover the meaning of the law, particularly its labeling requirements. The Bureau said it could not give positive instructions just then; manufacturers would have to read the law and make their labels conform. Harper modified his label to show the amounts of alcohol and acetanilid, as required by the law, but left the rest of the label untouched. In 1908, the government seized a number of bottles of his remedy, analyzed them, and brought suit under the provisions of the 1906 Act.

The issues: Were Harper's key ingredients "poisons" or were they not? Could they be considered food for the brain? Was it proper to describe a headache remedy as a "cure"? Were the labels accurate?

The prosecution's case: The prosecution sought to establish the fact that acetanilid was dangerous for human consumption. Dr. Hunt, a government scientist, testified that acetanilid would destroy up to 80 percent of red blood cells if taken in large doses over an extended period of time. Furthermore, Hunt asserted that the drug numbed the nerves rather than treating the actual ailments that caused headaches. It was therefore inaccurate to claim that acetanilid was a cure.

With respect to the issue of Harper's formula nourishing the brain, Dr. Wiley himself testified that one ingredient, alcohol, might furnish the body with "a modicum of food," but alcohol provided no nourishment to the brain and, indeed, might cause serious injury. Finally, the government asserted that Brane-Fude labels were also misleading in that the remedy contained only 24 percent alcohol rather than the 30 percent indicated on the label.

The defense's case: Expert witnesses testified that acetanilid was not a poison. The nation's leading authority on coal tar products, Dr. Virgil Coblentz, was asked what amount of the substance was lethal to humans. He answered that "there is no such thing." Doses as large as 437.5 grains of acetenilid had been taken without harmful results. A whole bottle of Brane-Fude contained only 24 grains. Harper's formula was therefore harmless. Furthermore, the cases in which acetanilid poisoning were alleged to have occurred actually resulted from other im-

purities not removed from coal tar products during manufacture. Coblentz also testified that some people might be allergic to acetanilid, but some persons also developed a rash from eating strawberries, which presented no cause for banning them.

The defense also argued that not only were the coal tar-based drugs not poisonous themselves, but they were also positively beneficial in that their use had decreased drug manufacturers reliance on opium and other narcotics. Finally, the defense put a score of witnesses on the stand to testify that Brane-Fude had "cured" their headaches.

The result: In his charge to the jury, the judge said that the prosecution need not prove all its points. It had only to prove one: that the Brane-Fude label was "false or misleading in any particular." Was there a distinct kind of food that nourished the brain contained by the product? If not, Harper had to be found guilty. With respect to evaluating the Brane-Fude label, the jury was to keep in mind that the "law was passed not to protect experts especially, not to protect scientific men who know the meaning and value of drugs, but for the purpose of protecting ordinary citizens."

The decision: The jury promptly found Harper guilty, largely on the issue of "brain food." In passing sentence on Harper, the judge argued that "this is a new law. To a certain extent the court is blazing the way. It now remains to be seen whether this law is to be enforced, so that every manufacturer, every druggist...will know that they must obey this law, that was made for the benefit of the people of the United States." The judge did not sentence Harper to jail. Yet, the judge argued, Harper was not "an innocent, technical violator of the law, but knew what he was doing." Accordingly, the judge imposed the maximum fine allowed by the law: $500 on one count and an additional $200 on another.

Reaction: As Dr. Wiley said at the time, he had hoped Harper would have been sent to jail as a message to all other drug manufacturers to observe the letter and spirit of the law. Wiley also said that Harper "had made two million on the product. He was fined $700...and was just $1,999,300 ahead."

Persisting Questions of History

Evaluating Consequences. During Harper's trial, President Theodore Roosevelt asked the prosecuting attorney to visit the White House. There TR told the lawyer to seek a jail sentence against Harper, saying, "It is your duty to make an example of this man, and show to the people of the country that the pure food law was enacted to protect them. You must use every argument in your power to convince the judge to impose a jail sentence. To a man of his wealth, a fine as the penalty...would be little less than ridiculous."

What do you think would have been an appropriate sentence for Harper? Consider the following possibilities:

- The sentence imposed by the court.
- A short (three-day) jail term.
- A longer (one-year) jail term.
- Public service, such as helping poor people or school children.
- Confiscation of all the money (or things purchased with that money) earned through the sale of Brane-Fude.
- Some combination of these penalties.

Develop reasons to support the sentence you choose. In developing your reasons, be sure to consider whether you think it is fair to make one person an "example" simply because he or she is the first person tried under a new law.

Defining Sufficient. One of the progressives' primary assumptions was that the general citizenry was capable of making wise decisions *if* they had sufficient accurate information to guide them. As the amount of information available through the media, as well as advertising, increases, however, determining what constitutes sufficient information becomes more and more difficult. Consider whether information in the following case is sufficient to allow the individual to make an intelligent decision.

> Since 1964, when the Surgeon General's first report linking cigarette smoking and cancer was released, the news media have carried numerous stories on the health risks involved in smoking. Ads for cigarettes have been banned

from television for nearly 20 years, and warnings about the health hazards of smoking have appeared on cigarette packages for a number of years. In 1989, the relatives of a smoker who died from lung cancer sued a tobacco company, claiming that the company's continued production and advertising of a hazardous product were responsible for the smoker's death. The tobacco company claimed that sufficient information was available for the smoker to make a reasoned judgment. If you were a member of the jury in this case, on which side would you vote?

Determining the Need for Reform

Many of the issues that the progressives were concerned with still exist today, although the form in which a problem is seen may be different. In this section, you will look at each of the necessary questions of the unit, examining how they apply to contemporary situations.

The two readings below present very different views of health care in the United States. As you read them, think about the following questions: Who should decide whether reforms in health care are needed and, if so, what reforms are needed? What special interests might be involved in working for/against reform in health care? What are the best methods for achieving change in the health care system?

* * * * *

Narrowing the Health Gap

A review of the published data and analysis indicates the sharp improvement in the health of the U.S. population over the past 25 years, including the poor. Davis reports that from 1960 to 1983, life expectancy at birth in the U.S. increased 5 years, from 69.7 to 74.7. Blacks experienced more rapid gains in life expectancy over this period than whites. The greatest improvement was for black women, gaining an increase of 7.9 years in life expectancy at birth over this period. Whereas in 1960 a black new born girl had a lower life expectancy than a white new born boy, by 1983 a black new born girl could expect to live over two years longer than a white new born boy. Life expectancy for new born black males increased by 4.5 years over this period, compared to 4.2 years for new born white males.

Age-adjusted death rates for the entire population declined 28% from 1960 to 1983. But Davis reports that the improvement was sharpest for those causes of death which have been most prevalent among the poor. Death from pneumonia and influenza dropped by 60% over this period, death from strokes fell by over 50%, and heart disease death rates fell by 34%. Deaths from tuberculosis, child birth, diabetes, and gastrointestinal diseases declined markedly as well.

Infant mortality was reduced by more than 50% from 1960 to 1983, dropping from 26 deaths per 1,000 to 11.2, with equivalent reductions for

From "Health Care Has Improved," by Peter J. Ferrera, in Poor and Minority Health Care, edited by Gary E. McCuen (Hudson, WI: Gary E. McCuen Publishers, 1988).

both blacks and whites. The proportion of low birth weight infants has also declined. Infants weighing less than 2,500 grams dropped from 7.9% of all births in 1970 to 6.8% in 1981.

Butler, et al. note that the improved mortality trends hold for older children as well. For children between ages 1 to 4, mortality rates have fallen from 5.6 per 1,000 in 1930 to 0.8 per 1,000 in 1969 and 0.7 per 1,000 in 1978. For children aged 5 to 14, mortality rates fell by two-thirds from 1940 to 1978, dropping from 0.3 per 1,000 to 0.1 per 1,000. The authors indicate that improvement among poor children has been somewhat more rapid than for the general population, resulting in a narrowing of the gap in mortality rates between poor and nonpoor children...

The Cost to the Nation of Failing to Care for Poor Pregnant Women and Infants Is High

Among western industrialized nations, America stands nearly alone in its failure to ensure that comprehensive medical care is available for all pregnant women and babies who need it. Instead we have developed a health care financing system in which: (1) a family's access to health services depends upon having health insurance; and (2) there exists no basic, residual public or private program for financing health care for all families not insured through the workplace. There is simply no program equivalent to Medicare for financing health services for younger, uninsured families. Instead, we maintain a "safety net" consisting of a patchwork of highly inadequate categorical programs through which millions of children and pregnant women slip annually.

Experts point to numerous factors that influence the health outcomes of infants. We believe, however, that poverty is the single greatest factor. Poverty virtually destroys a family's ability to obtain needed health and related services. The social isolation and absence of supports caused by poverty leave in their wake illness, death, and a lifetime of handicaps for a disproportionate number of children born to disadvantaged families.

Poverty is strongly associated with poor health among children. Poor children face an increased risk of low birthweight, neonatal and postneonatal mortality, and such disabilities as retardation, cerebral palsy, autism, vision and hearing defects, and development delay.

From Congressional testimony of Luanne Nyberg of the Children's Defense Fund on October 31, 1985.

Many of the underlying causes of death may emanate directly or indirectly from poverty. For example, recent evidence suggests that Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), now a leading killer of infants aged one month to one year, is associated with elevated levels of lead in a baby's bloodstream. Elevated lead levels pose particular problems among lower income children.

Moreover, poverty is associated not only with a greater propensity toward illness and handicap but also with a greater severity of illness when illness patterns between poor and nonpoor children are compared. Thus, for example, a cold that afflicts a poor infant is more likely to develop into a deadly respiratory infection because of inadequate housing, poor nutrition, and lack of access to medical care...

Persisting Questions of History

1. Identify some factual issues on which the two reports above disagree. How might you gather data on these issues? How might you deal with these disagreements in trying to determine whether reforms in health care are needed?

2. Which of the following groups do you think would have a special interest in the issue of health care reform? What would their interest be? Should these interests be considered in planning for reform?

- Insurance companies
- Corporations that operate hospitals
- National Organization of Women
- American Medical Association
- NAACP and other organizations representing minorities
- Health care workers other than doctors
- Taxpayers

3. If you were planning a campaign to reform health care for the poor, what actions would you take? Consider publication of muckraking books, passage of federal legislation, activities by consumer groups, speeches or other activity by celebrities, and ideas you develop yourself. Put together a "reform program" you think would be most successful in providing high-quality health care for all Americans. Be sure to consider possible disadvantages of the actions.

Identifying the Government's Responsibility

Regulation of the food and drug industry, like regulation of many other areas, has grown increasingly complicated since the progressive era. In addition to the difficulty of enforcement, changes in food production and marketing have added to the complexity of the issue. Furthermore, greater access to information about product safety suggests to some that individuals ought to take more responsibility for their own consumer decisions.

As you read the following items about the food industry today, think about the division of responsibility between the government and the individual. What should the government do to provide for and protect the public from unsafe foods? What should the individual's responsibility be for making informed consumer choices?

* * * * *

Item: "American farmers apply an estimated 1 billion pounds of chemicals each year to fruits, vegetables, and meat. Trouble is, the chemicals don't stay down on the farm. From relatively harmless additives to highly toxic compounds, minute amounts of the substances accompany foodstuffs to grocery stores, and ultimately to our dining tables. The chemicals in foods come in four broad classes:

- Pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides used to protect crops against a dizzying array of agricultural pests and diseases.
- Growth hormones, antibiotics, and other drugs given to cattle, hogs, and poultry to stimulate growth and keep the animals healthy.
- Outright poisons – natural and manmade.
- Preservatives and additives" (From *Seattle Times/Post-Intelligencer*, July 21, 1985, p. B1).

Item: The following excerpt describes how international sales of restricted pesticides boomerang on American people in the United States.

- Over 15 percent of the beans and 13 percent of the peppers imported from Mexico, during one recent period, were found to violate FDA pesticide residue standards.
- Freshly cut flowers flown in from Colombia caused a rash of organophosphate poisonings among American florists.
- Imported beef from Central America often contains pesticide contamination. The GAO has estimated that 14 percent of all U.S. meat is now contaminated with illegal residues, and imports make a significant contribution to that total...
- Peppers from a shipment that was sent on to supermarkets turned out to have 29 times more pesticide residue than allowed by U.S. law (from *Circle of Poison*, by David Weir and Mark Schapiro, Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1981, pp. 29-30).

Item: "Pesticides contaminating the most common American foods may be responsible for as many as 20,000 cancer cases a year, according to a National Academy of Sciences report" (From *Washington Post*, May 21, 1987, p. A33).

Item: "Part of the problem in any proposed regulatory action regarding food additives involves the difficulty of demonstrating cause-and-effect relationships where the effect may not occur until years after the alleged cause. There is little, if any, controversy about regulations relative to low-acid canned foods, since almost everyone has been sick shortly after eating some 'tainted' food.

However, in dealing with a substance that is a weak carcinogen, such as saccharin, there is only a small chance that any given individual will be affected. Furthermore, it may be many years before the effect (cancer) occurs, and it will not be possible to link definitively any one case of cancer to the additive.

Many people therefore believe that they should have 'freedom of choice' regarding whether or not they should ingest a potential carcinogen. The difficulty is that few Americans are in a position to make reasoned judgments based on probabilistic arguments" (From Jere E. Goyan, "Food Additives: How Good Are the Gatekeepers?" *Food and People Article Booklet*, University of California at San Diego, 1982).

Item: In 1987, the Reagan Administration, backed by both consumer and industry groups, decided to abandon the 81-year-old provision that labels on foods could not carry health claims. Administration officials were not able to agree on new regulations that would ensure that such claims are valid. As a result, companies have made health claims for such products as breakfast cereals, juice, margarine, fish oil, and vitamin supplements. In the first half of 1989, it was estimated that 40 percent of all new products came with some kind of health claim.

Unfortunately, many of the health claims are exaggerated, and the Food and Drug Administration is now working to develop new rules that would prevent such exaggeration. One proposal was to require that manufacturers make only claims supported by two major federal studies of diet and health. For example, the current claims made for oat bran would not be allowable, since the "Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health" says there is no agreement about whether such soluble fiber reduces cholesterol.

Item: "The joint contributions to congressional candidates from the food-chain gang [chemical companies that manufacture $6.5 billion worth of farm chemicals a year; the agribusiness giants which use them; and grocery manufacturers which process the food] for 1985-86 came to a staggering $6,533,937, according to records filed with the Federal Elections Commission. Of this, $1,077,472 went to members of the agriculture committees [which have jurisdiction over the EPA's pesticides program]. In contrast, the major environmental PACs [political action committees] gave a total of $361,524..." (From Sheila Kaplan, "The Food Chain Gang," *Common Cause*, Sept/Oct 1987, p. 13).

Persisting Questions of History

1. Do consumers have enough information available to make wise decisions about food safety? Can the average individual interpret the data available about such issues as pesticide contamination? If not, what can individuals do to improve their ability to make wise decisions?

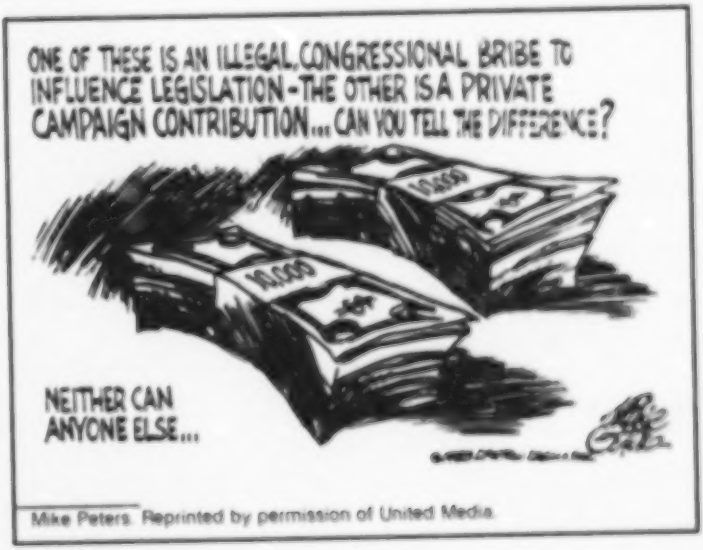
2. For each area below, what do you think the government's role should be in protecting the health and safety of citizens?

- Chemicals in foods
- Sale of restricted pesticides to foreign countries
- Use of such additives as saccharin
- Labeling of food products, including health claims

Defining Corruption

As in the progressive era, political cartoonists often target their works at perceived instances of corruption in government. Study the cartoons below, identifying the type of behavior the artist is making fun of. Do you agree that this behavior corrupts democratic government? If so, what actions should good citizens take to address such behavior?

* * * * *


ONE OF THESE IS AN ILLEGAL CONGRESSIONAL BRIBE TO INFLUENCE LEGISLATION - THE OTHER IS A PRIVATE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION... CAN YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE?
NEITHER CAN ANYONE ELSE...

Mike Peters. Reprinted by permission of United Media.

... I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR I WILL FAITHFULLY EXECUTE THE PUBLIC OFFICE I AM ABOUT TO HOLD...
... AND WILL, TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES ...
... AS WELL AS THE LOBBYING FIRM I'LL BE STARTING IN A FEW YEARS REPRESENTING THE CONTACTS I'LL MAKE WHILE I'M EXECUTING THIS OFFICE SO I CAN GO ON TO MAKE BIG BUCKS FOR ME AND MYSELF...
SO HELP ME GOD...

Jim Morin. Copyright © 1989. The Miami Herald. Reprinted with permission.

Persisting Questions of History

1. What behavior is each cartoonist identifying as corrupt? Do you agree or disagree that this behavior constitutes corruption? Explain your reasons.

2. If you agree that the behaviors shown in the cartoons are corrupt, what actions do you think the good citizen should take to address such problems? Do you think the problems arise because of citizens' inaction? Do citizens "deserve" a government that allows such behaviors?

Review, Reflection, and Research

Identifying Needed Reforms

Which reforms do you think are most pressing or most needed to deal with the problems that first began coming to light during the progressive era? Consider the following types of reforms, add additional reforms of your own, and then rank them (by letter), first in order of importance and second in order of feasibility or possibility of implementation.

a. Minimum standard of living, including housing, for all Americans.
b. Equal opportunity for all Americans to get an education.
c. Fair tax laws.
d. Maximum income law so that no one can make more than $500,000 a year.
e. A change in people's values so that they want fewer material things.
f. Reduction of competition in the society so that people work more for the intrinsic value of contributing to the community than they do for getting ahead of their neighbor.
g. More consumer protection so that people get better value for what they buy.
h. Other.

Most Important	Most Possible to Achieve
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Determining Responsibility

To what extent should consumers be limited in their choices because those choices have a large impact on society? For example, should smoking be banned because we know that each pack of cigarettes smoked costs society at least $3.15 in health care expenses, not to mention lost work time, higher rates of illness, higher incidence of low

birth weight among children born to mothers who smoke (which in turn leads to many others problems), and other costs? (Cigarette sales in 1989 are estimated to be 27,500,000,000 packs.) What should the government's responsibility be when one individual's actions affect others? What should the individual's responsibility be? Consider both the smoker and the nonsmoker.

Defining the Good Citizen

Ralph Nader is perhaps the best-known consumer advocate in the United States. Nader rose to prominence in 1964 with a book called *Unsafe at Any Speed*, in which he accused the automobile industry of making unsafe cars. When General Motors, the maker of the Corvair – whose links with highway deaths were highlighted in the book – hired a detective to dig up "dirt" on Nader, he sued for invasion of privacy. With the $280,000 settlement he won in the case, Nader started Public Citizen, Inc., a Washington-based consumer advocacy group. Over the next 20 years, Nader helped start more than 100 organizations. He charged such institutions as television manufacturers, union leaders, bank holding companies, the food industry, insurance companies, and Congress with abusing consumer rights.

Recently, Nader turned over Public Citizen to an associate and is concentrating on other activities. He appears on a tabloid television program and is working on several innovative projects in his tome town in Winsted, Connecticut.

Find out more about Nader's past and currrent activities. What have been the positive effects of his activities? What, if any, have been the negative effects? Does Nader fit your definition of a good citizen? Do you think there are some people who would view Nader as a bad citizen? Why or why not?

To order this unit or for more information on the Public Issues Series, contact:

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THE PROGRESSIVE ERA: THE LIMITS OF REFORM TEACHER'S GUIDE

Public Issues Series Social Science Education Consortium 1989

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The Public Issues Series

The *Public Issues Series* was originally conceived of by the Harvard Social Studies Project of the 1960s and 1970s. The major purpose of the series—both then and now—is to help students analyze and discuss persisting human dilemmas related to public issues. We would emphasize that the term *public issues* is not synonymous with *current events*. By public issues, we mean problems or value dilemmas persisting throughout history and across cultures. The situations of Christian martyrs in Rome, a bureaucrat in Nazi Germany, a slave in 19th-century America, or an Ethiopian refugee in Texas in 1988 all represent important public issues. We believe that most of the important current events can be clarified by reference to public issues in other places and other times. Thus, all the units in the series suggest parallels between historical illustrations of persisting human dilemmas and present issues in the United States and the world.

The units in the series use historical, fictional, and contemporary situations. They also assist students in using a structured approach to issues analysis and in developing the skills of reasoned discussion. The units are not designed to be followed mechanistically through every question. There is no critical sequence of exercises. Teachers should view the materials provided as possible strategies for developing discussion of public issues and should pick and choose among the materials according to their own goals. In making selections, teachers should note that students will need information from other sources to discuss some questions intelligently; this may be a factor in deciding whether to have students address those particular questions.

As classes work with the materials, it is important to give students a sense of progress by periodically summarizing where the case material and discussion have taken them, particularly in terms of their discussion skills and the central, or necessary, questions of the unit.

The Necessary Questions

This unit on the progressives focuses on the following organizing questions:

- Who should decide what reforms are needed? How can we distinguish between a change to

advance a special interest and a reform in the public interest? What are the best methods for achieving change?

- What is the government's responsibility to provide for and protect the health and safety of individuals? What is the individual's responsibility for protecting him/herself and other members of society?
- What is a corrupt government? Can government be better than the people it governs? What is the good citizen?

Primary source documents and secondary sources are used to acquaint student with how these questions have manifested themselves in U.S. history. The first section of the book looks at the problems and motivations that stimulated the progressives to action. The second and third sections look at responses to those problems – starting with such local activities as settlement houses and reforms in municipal government and moving to federal actions. Students then examine issues regarding regulation of the food industry today.

Analyzing the Issues

In addressing the necessary questions of the unit, students will grapple with ethical-value questions, definitional issues, and issues of fact-explanation. For example, deciding who was responsible for redressing problems experienced by city dwellers in the late 1800s and early 1900s requires students to examine values or beliefs about social responsibility and to define what a "good citizen" is. In examining the effects of various reforms, students are called upon to judge conflicting claims.

As students work through these and other issues, they should practice the explicit stating of issues and use of analogy to clarify their positions. The teacher's role in the discussion process is that of a questioner and clarifier. Another important teacher function is summarizing the progress students have made. Students may not readily perceive the ways in which their thinking has changed during a discussion, but a teacher synopsis of the questions examined and the strategies used to support positions can reinforce students' engagement in the discussion process.

Teaching the Unit

Each Public Issues unit can be taught in a variety of ways. The following is one way to approach *The Progressive Era: The Limits of Reform*. Activities that introduce skills with which your students are already familiar can be skipped and the skill briefly reviewed.

Note that this booklet is not intended to replace your usual approach to the progressives, but to enhance and expand on it. If you normally cover the problems of industrialization, immigration, and urbanization in depth, for example, you may wish to skip the first section of the unit, focusing instead on the sections that look at responses to these problems. If your class reads *The Jungle* in language arts, you may wish to skip the excerpts from that book.

Preparing to Teach the Unit. Tell students that they are going to be taking part in a unit on social problems and reform. Ask them to brainstorm a list of current social problems, and post them on the chalkboard (you may want to leave this list on the board throughout the unit).

Explain that the unit will involve a great deal of discussion. The primary purpose of these discussions will be clarifying and better understand positions on various issues.

Choose one of the issues from the students' list on which you know there will be strong disagreement in the class. Ask students not to discuss the issue, but to imagine some of the difficulties they might have in trying to discuss it. You may need to provide some prompting questions; for example, for the problem of homelessness, you might ask the following: Do you think we would all agree about the causes of homelessness? Do you think we have enough information about how many and what kind of people are homeless? Do you think our feelings would keep us from discussing the issue calmly?

Explain to students that knowing how to categorize issues can be helpful because it helps identify the kinds of differences among discussants. If discussants understand the basis of the differences, they can better address those differences. Distribute the first handout and go over it with the class. The handout describes three types of issues and strategies for dealing with them. It also emphasizes the frustration that can result when not enough information is available to resolve fact-explanation issues on which a discussion may turn. Be sure to spend some time with students discussing how analogies can be used.

Next, divide the class into small groups of four or five students each (you may wish to maintain these small discussion groups throughout the unit), and allow time for groups to complete the assignment on the handout.

Introducing the Unit. Assign students to read pages 3-5 of the unit. Conduct a brief discussion of the necessary questions of the unit, asking students to reflect on whether these questions apply to the issues they listed on the chalkboard. Remind students to keep these questions in mind as they proceed through the unit.

The Emergence of Progressivism. "The Emergence of Progressivism" begins with an essay on conditions at the turn of the century, followed by a series of brief items describing problems of the progressive era. The first "Persisting Question of History" following these readings asks students to generate and analyze possible solutions.

The second "Persisting Question" deals with determining responsibility for quality of life. Encourage students to develop a consensus definition of quality of life before pursuing the issue of responsibility. Students may find the second handout in this guide a useful tool in examining the issue.

The third question presents an excerpt from Andrew Carnegie, describing his views on the prevailing social system. In another selection from *The Gospel of Wealth*, Carnegie described how the wealthy should spend their money to help society. You might read the following quotation to students and then ask them to develop their own lists of how surplus wealth should be used. What accounts for differences between their lists and Carnegie's? Is administration of wealth through private organizations a reasonable way of reforming society? To whom are such private organizations accountable?

> The question then arises...what is the proper mode of administering wealth after the laws upon which civilization is founded have thrown it into the hands of the few? And it is of this great question that I believe I offer the true solution.
>
> ...let us endeavor to present some of the best uses to which a millionaire can devote the surplus of which he should regard himself as only the trustee.
>
> *First.* The founding of a university by men enormously rich. Perhaps the greatest sum ever given by an individual for any purpose is the gift of Senator Stanford.
>
> *Second.* What is the best gift which can be given to a community? A free library occupies the first place, provided the community will accept and maintain it as a public institution.
>
> *Third.* The founding or extension of hospitals, medical colleges, laboratories, and other institutions connected with the alleviation of human suffering, and especially with the prevention rather than with the cure of human ills.
>
> *Fourth.* In the very front rank of benefactions public parks should be placed, always provided that the community undertakes to maintain, beautify, and preserve them inviolate.
>
> *Fifth.* We have another good use for surplus wealth in providing our cities with halls suitable for meetings of all kinds, and for concerts of elevating music.
>
> *Sixth.* A form of beneficence which is not uncommon [in Europe] is providing swimming baths for the people.
>
> *Seventh.* Churches as fields for the use of surplus wealth have purposely been reserved until the last, because...gifts to churches, it may be said, are not, in one sense, gifts to the community at large, but to special classes.

"Citizens Take Action" describes the activities of city clubs and settlement houses. Questions following the section focus on the effectiveness of voluntary action and development of a definition of citizen; this definition will be refined later in the unit.

Presented next is a brief reading on the role of education in solving social problems. Again, students can look at what the schools are being asked to do in relation to contemporary problems. Because the author in this section makes many claims for the benefits of education, students are asked to consider how those claims could be evaluated.

Reforming City Government. This section shifts the focus to the need for reform in local government. The section opens with a brief overview essay, which can be skipped if students have already been exposed to this information. The next reading describes "A Day in the Life of a Machine Politician." Questions following this reading focus on defining good government and analyzing the ways in which political machines provided services.

Next is a series of brief items on the problems facing city governments and reforms suggested to address those problems. Students analyze these reforms, focusing particularly on the extent to which they reflected the public interest or special interests.

The final portion of this section contains excerpts by journalists Lincoln Steffens and Walter Lippman. Questions focus on defining corruption, determining who is responsible for misgovernment, and evaluating the effect citizens' expectations have on their response to government. Some contemporary American analogies are given, but students might also consider examples from other countries. For example, to what extent will rising expectations on the part of Soviet citizens, who for many years expected little from their government, affect how they view the success of reform efforts? What role did expectations of government play in the Chinese students' demands for democratization, and how will the repressive response change expectations?

Federal Action: Consumer Protection. This section shifts the focus to efforts at the federal level. The first reading in this section is an excerpt from *The Jungle*, Upton Sinclair's realistic novel about the meat-packing industry. The text mentions that President Theodore Roosevelt read the book and, as a result, named a commission to investigate the meat-packing industry. Students might discuss whether a single work could have such an impact on a president today. Why or why not? Students might find it interesting to investigate what recent presidents have read. How often do they read novels? What kinds of novels do they read? Do they read other material written by "outsiders" or does most of their information come from people within their own administrations? In what sense could people within the administration be regarded as a "special-interest group"?

The questions following this reading focus on determining when federal action is needed to solve a problem and on analyzing the graduated income tax, another reform of the progressive era. Students should be aware that conflicts over the income tax have persisted to the present.

"Regulating the Food Industry" contains two brief readings – one on the efforts to enact pure food and drug legislation and the other on the first case tried under that legislation. Before they read the results of "The Case of Cuforhedake Brane-Fude," students might suggest what they believe to be a reasonable penalty for Robert Harper. The third handout in this guide may be useful in that exercise, as well as in discussing the second "Persisting Question of History" following the reading.

Today's Issues. This section contains three contemporary analogies, paralleling the three critical questions of the unit (page 4). The first focuses on identifying needed reforms in the health care system. This exercise could be used as the basis for a long-term research effort; the material provided in the unit is only detailed enough to stimulate some discussion about the need for such reforms. The second analogy continues the focus on regulation of the food industry, looking at the responsibility of the government and of the individual in light of current concerns. The final section presents two political cartoons; students are asked to identify the behavior being identified as corrupt in each cartoon, determine whether they believe that behavior is corrupt, and plan a responsive citizen action.

Review, Reflection, and Research. These exercises include writing, research, and discussion. You may assign them selectively for completion by individual students or small groups, or they can be used as topics for large-group discussion and reflection on the unit. They can also be used for evaluation purposes.

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Student Name _____

STRATEGIES FOR ANALYZING PUBLIC ISSUES

In discussing public issues, people generally look at three kinds of questions: (1) ethical or value questions, (2) questions of definition, and (3) questions involving facts and explanations. Particular strategies can be used to support arguments related to each of these kinds of questions.

Kind of Question	Definition	Strategies
Ethical or value	Questions that deal with judgments about what should or ought to be done – judgments about rightness or wrongness	Use of value-laden or "loaded" language Use of a respected or venerable source Prediction of a valued consequence Using an analogy – a similar case – to point out conflicting values and how they are weighed
Definitional	Questions about the meaning of an important word or phrase	Stipulation – agreeing to a particular definition Use of an authoritative source
Fact/explanation	Questions focusing on disagreements about the descriptions or explanations of events	Appealing to common knowledge or common sense Citing personal observations Referring to an authoritative source

Positions on public issues may be based on factual claims for which there is no evidence at hand. Differences on these issues may therefore be resolved by gathering more information, rather than by using the strategies listed above. Thus, you will find it helpful in discussing issues to identify the basis for disagreements and determine whether disagreements could be resolved if more evidence were available.

It can be frustrating not to have all the information you need. At times, it may even be impossible to find the information while the discussion is going on. If you cannot take time out to gather more evidence, you can make a note of the information you need and use one of the following strategies to continue discussion: (1) the group may agree to stipulate a particular conclusion to the issue, or (2) The members of the group may agree to bypass or temporarily ignore the issue, using other arguments to make their cases.

Assignment

The two statements below describe a current issue. Read the two statements and identify several factual issues on which they disagree. How might you gather data on these issues? Give an example of stipulating a conclusion to one of the disagreements. Could you agree to bypass or temporarily ignore any of the issues?

We have enough information about the value of punishment to know that it is worthless. It does not foster rehabilitation, nor does it deter. The imposition of pain or humiliation upon an individual will, as any textbook on correction substantiates, isolate and alienate that individual. Punishment fosters attitudes that are incompatible with community living, and may effectively end any hope of modifying the criminal's behavior.

Thomas J. Allanan, former president,
New York State Probation and Parole Officers Association

Were the law to be deprived of the instruments of punishment, it would become the essence of futility, and the social order would collapse. Punishment makes possible the dignity and the integrity of law. To imagine that we could ever abolish punishment would be to entertain the fantasy that we could endure without law. The issue of punishment is, in a word, the issue of law.

Roy Eckardt, Professor of Religion, Lehigh University

Student Name _____

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Suppose you are interested in deciding whether or not you, someone else, or a group of people should be considered responsible for something. Look carefully at the situation and consider each of the ideas listed below. Try to answer the questions following each idea for the situation you are considering. You will discover that not all the ideas are useful in every situation.

1. **The Event or Situation**
   - What is the event for which someone might be considered responsible?
2. **Persons Involved**
   - Who are the people involved who might be considered responsible for what happened?
3. **Causation**
   - Who caused, or helped to cause, the event or circumstance to happen?
4. **State of Mind**
   - What was the individual's state of mind when he or she caused something to happen? To answer this question, consider the following points:

     Intent: Did the person or persons intentionally cause the event or situation to happen?

     Recklessness or Carelessness: Was the person or persons who caused the event reckless or careless?

     Knowledge of probable consequences: Did the person or persons know, or have the capacity to know, the probable results of their actions?
5. **Control or Choice**
   - Did the person or persons have control over their own actions or a choice to do other than what they did?
6. **Duty or Obligation**
   - Did the person or persons have a duty or an obligation to act, or to refrain from acting, as they did?
7. **More Important Values, Interests, or Responsibilities**
   - Did the person or persons have more important values, interests, or responsibilities that caused them to act as they did?

What situations have you been involved in where one of the ideas listed above might have been useful in deciding that a person should be considered responsible? Describe that situation; then describe another situation where the same idea could be used to determine that a person should *not* be considered responsible.

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Student Name _____

WHAT IS A PROPER RESPONSE TO A WRONG OR INJURY?

1. **Identify the Wrong or Injury**

   - What was the wrong, if any?
     What was the injury, if any?

   - How serious was the wrong or injury?

     Impact: How extensive was the impact? How many people were involved, how much property, how much land, how many plants, animals, or other things of value were affected?

     Duration: Over how long a period of time did the wrong or injury take place?

     Extent: How great an effect did the wrong or injury have? (scratch or loss of life or limb?)

     Offensiveness: How offensive was the wrong in terms of your sense of right and wrong, human dignity, or other values?

2. **Identify the Relevant Characteristics of the Person Causing the Wrong or Injury**

   - *State of Mind:*

     Intent: Did the person act intentionally or purposely to bring about the wrong or injury?

     Recklessness: Did the person deliberately or consciously ignore obvious risks in causing the wrong or injury?

     Carelessness: Did the person act in a thoughtless manner, paying inadequate attention to the possibility of a forseeable wrong or injury?

     Knowledge of Probable Consequences: Did the person know, or should the person have known, that what he or she was doing might cause a wrong or injury?

     Control: Did the person have physical/mental control over his or her actions?

     Duty or Obligation: Did the person have a duty or obligation to act, or refrain from acting, as he or she did?

     Mitigating Circumstances: Did the person have more important values, interests, motives, or responsibilities that caused him or her to act in a certain way?

   - *Past History:* What facts about the person's past history are relevant to deciding upon a proper response?

   - *Character and Personality Traits:* What facts about the person's character are relevant to deciding upon a proper response?

   - *Feelings After Causing a Wrong or Injury:* What were the person's feelings after having caused the wrong or injury, e.g., sorrow, remorse, pleasure, apathy?

   - *Person's Role in Causing the Wrong or Injury:* Did the person act alone, as a leader, an accomplice, an unwitting accomplice?

3. **Identify Relevant Characteristics of the Person Wronged or Injured**

   - *Contribution:* Did the person contribute to causing the wrong or injury he or she suffered?

   - *Ability to Recover:* How able is the person to recover from the wrong or injury?

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4. **Identify Common Responses to Wrongs and Injuries and Their Purposes**

   - *Inform:* Should the person be informed of what he or she did that was wrong or injurious? Why?
   - *Overlook or Ignore:* Should the wrong or injury be overlooked or ignored? Why?
   - *Forgive or Pardon:* Should the person be forgiven or pardoned for causing the wrong or injury? Why?
   - *Punish:* Should the person be punished?
   - *Restore:* Should the person be required to restore what was taken or damaged?
   - *Compensate:* Should the person be required to compensate in one way or another for causing the wrong or injury?
   - *Provide Treatment or Education:* Should treatment or education be provided? Why?

5. **Consider Related Values and Interests**

   - *Corrective Justice:* What responses would result in a correction of the wrong or injury?
   - *Deterrence and/or Prevention:* Which responses may deter the person from causing further wrongs and injuries and prevent others from similar acts?
   - *Distributive Justice:* What responses have been made to others who have caused similar wrongs or injuries?
   - *Human Dignity:* What beliefs about human dignity should be taken into account in deciding what would be a proper response?
   - *Preservation of Human Life:* What responses will be most likely to preserve the life of the wrongdoer and lives of members of society? Should the life of the wrongdoer be taken to preserve and protect the lives of others?
   - *Efficient Use of Resources:* How costly are various responses in terms of available resources?
   - *Freedom:* How do various responses affect the freedom of the wrongdoer and other members of society? How can limitations on the freedom of the wrongdoer be justified?
   - *Proportionality*: What responses would be reasonable in relation to the seriousness of the wrong or injury?
   - *Revenge:* What responses might satisfy the desire for revenge?

Are the steps above enough to consider when deciding how to correct a wrong or injury? What other considerations should be added? What should be the purposes of correcting wrongs and injuries? What values and interests are related to the correction of wrongs and injuries?